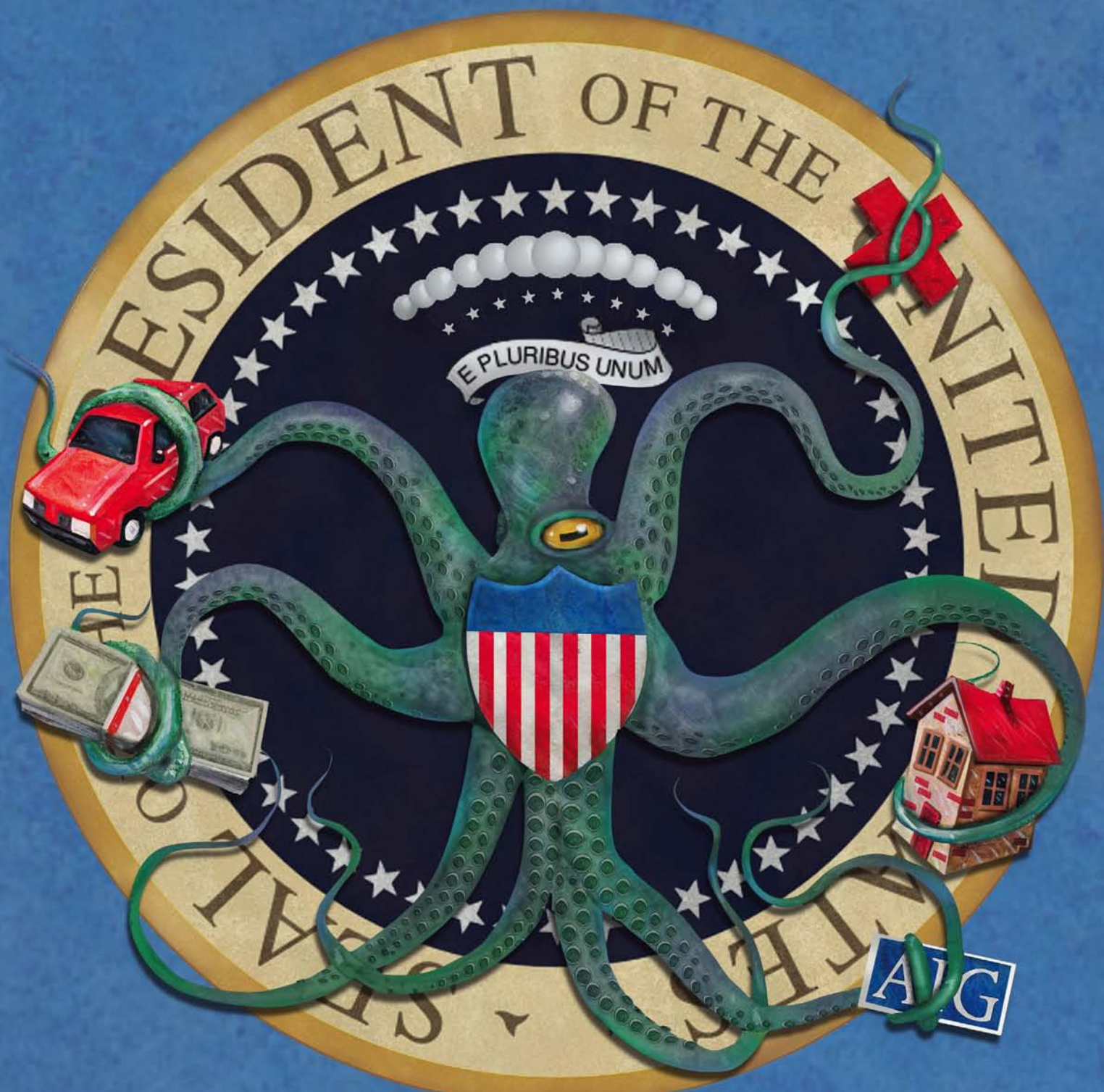


HITCHENS IN SOUTH AFRICA ■ GOP KEYNESIANS ■ ANTIWAR LEFT BEHIND

APRIL 20, 2009

# The American Conservative



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## [ECONOMY]

### BANK WORLD

At the conclusion of the G-20 summit in London, leaders announced “a new world order.” President Obama, Gordon Brown, *et al.* promised to scare away our financial calamities with colossal amounts of money—\$1.1 trillion was the figure touted. All the globo-feel-goodery couldn’t disguise the lie, however: the *Financial Times* reported that the new commitments were probably “below \$100bn, and most of those were in train without the G-20 summit.”

Yet if the masters of the universe were not able to agree on how widely they might open their taxpayers’ wallets, they could all sing the corporatist tune: a global crisis demands global solutions. In other words, we need more power.

Thus the G-20 delegates introduced a new panacea, the Financial Stability Board, to control “all systemically important financial institutions, instruments and markets.” That means those nasty hedge funds, assured the press officers. Yet FSB’s potential remit is far greater and more ominous. All firms may now be subjected to FSB directives on pay, compensation, and “corporate social responsibility.”

Add to that the catalogue of red-tape schemes in the summit’s closing statement—cloaked, as usual, by empty words about the perils of protectionism—and you see emerging a framework for global fiscal governance. “The era of banking secrecy is over,” declared the G-20 heads proudly. So, too, perhaps, the wealth of nations.

## [SECURITY]

### ROCKET’S RED SCARE

On Sunday, April 5, the glorious North Korean space program, marvel of the modern world, launched its first satellite into the ocean 1,300 miles off the coast of Japan. Susan Rice, U.S. ambassador to the UN, said this feat

“merits a clear and strong response.” Yet the Security Council refused to act—just as it had earlier refused to act against the “grave and gathering danger” that President Bush warned about in 2002. Such cowardice disgusted Newt Gingrich, who dreams of one day becoming America’s own Dear Leader. Before the launch he said the U.S. “should take whatever preemptive actions are necessary” to prevent North Korea’s great leap forward into 1950s-era rocketry.

Newt was not the only pol rattled by Kim’s Taepodong and other unruly projectiles. A “bipartisan” clutch of four Republican senators, Joseph Lieberman, and Democrat Mark Begich—whose Alaskan caribou might just about be in range of the Nork rocket—took the occasion to demand more money for Star Wars. At least the Connecticut senator, in his letter to Obama, was forthright: his interest was not in putting America first but rather “cooperation on missile defense is now a critical component of many of our closest security partnerships around the world.” So let’s spend billions to defend Georgia and Poland from Russian ICBM’s—as if even trillions would be enough—and Kim’s rocketry set. Or here’s a better idea: let’s not.

North Korea is a serious threat to its southern neighbor and a not inconsiderable risk to Japan. But the South Koreans no longer want our military forces in their country, and Japan would like to

re-establish her own defenses—which she is quite capable of doing. Leave this missile-gap hysteria for the history books. The best way to contain North Korea is by scaling back our own presence in the region and letting our long-suffering, much subsidized allies shoulder the burden for their own defense. Our caribou, meanwhile, will take care of themselves.

## [ENVIRONMENT]

### SHADOW ON THE SUN

In his Inaugural Address, Barack Obama promised to “restore science to its rightful place.” Some recognized this as code for funding embryo destruction with tax dollars and kicking creationists out of public schools. Others like *New York Times* science writer Dennis Overbye swooned over the scientist in chief: “When the new president went on vowing to harness the sun, the wind and the soil, and to ‘wield technology’s wonders,’ I felt the glow of a spring sunrise washing my cheeks.”

Don’t enjoy the glow too much, Dennis. According to the president’s science adviser, we might need to put a little garbage between the sun and earth. In his first interview after being confirmed as director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, John Holdren suggested that we might combat global warming by shooting pollution particles into the upper atmosphere to reflect the sun’s rays. “It’s got to be looked at,” he said. “We don’t have



the luxury of taking any approach off the table."

Of course, Holdren hastened to add that filling the stratosphere with sun-blocking junk could have "grave side effects"—an extinction event, perhaps—but "we might get desperate enough..."

[WORLD]

## BIBI'S FIRST WAR

Asked by Wolf Blitzer, "How worried are you that the new government of Israel, under Prime Minister Netanyahu, will launch a strike to take out Iran's nuclear facilities?" Vice President Joe Biden replied, "I don't believe that Prime Minister Netanyahu would do that."

Perhaps he hasn't checked with his buddy Bibi lately, for the new Israeli PM seems inclined to do just that. He promised that if he was elected, "Iran will not acquire nuclear arms." Now he's angling to make good on that pledge. Aluf Benn reports in *Ha'aretz*, "Politicians in touch with Netanyahu say he has already made up his mind to destroy Iran's nuclear installations."

Israel's intelligence chief, Amos Yadlin, announced that Tehran has passed the "point of no return." The Home Front Command will soon conduct the largest exercise in its history to prepare the population for war. And the Israeli Air Force is conducting long-range training in Greece. In an interview with *The Atlantic's* Jeffrey Goldberg—"Netanyahu to Obama: Stop Iran Or I Will"—an unnamed aide to the prime minister said that Israel's time limit is months, "not years."

Netanyahu says in the same interview that a nuclear Iran would "create a great sea change in the balance of power in our area"—a surprisingly candid admission. For while he made the threat of a second Holocaust a campaign staple, the existential issue is overblown. The immediate fear is that if Israel were no longer the

only nuclear player in the region, Tehran would be empowered to make demands on behalf of the Palestinians.

To his credit, George W. Bush resisted an Israeli attempt to enlist America as copilot on this mission. Next month, Netanyahu will meet with Barack Obama. He probably knows better than to suggest that they go bombing together. But he also knows that the mere threat of military action charges the air enough to make dialogue between the U.S. and Iran all but impossible. ■

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—The Editors

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[absolute power]

# President of Everything

Much as he complained about his predecessor's imperial reach, from cars to companies nothing eludes Barack Obama's grasp.

By Brian Doherty

IN DECEMBER 2007, Sen. Barack Obama's reassurances to the *Boston Globe* suggested that he understood constitutional limits on executive and government power. He knew that there were things the "president does not have power under the Constitution" to do, including unilaterally authorizing military action and surveilling citizens without warrants. He said he would "reject the Bush administration's claim that the president has plenary authority under the Constitution to detain U.S. citizens without charges as unlawful enemy combatants."

That thoughtful skeptic of executive power now sits in the Oval Office. Isolating random bits of his presidential rhetoric, you can almost believe that he understands how a society really thrives. Obama said in his pseudo-State of the Union Address, "The answers to our problems don't lie beyond our reach. They exist in our laboratories and universities; in our fields and our factories; in the imaginations of our entrepreneurs and the pride of the hardest-working people on Earth."

But in just three months, we have seen what Obama means when he talks about "reach." He doesn't mean "our reach" but his own. His sense of that reach, and the abrupt and scary speed with which he's used it, marks him as an

executive with a tentacled grip—multiple, crushing, inescapable. No longer the cautious critic of presidential power of the campaign trail, he now sees nothing as beyond his grasp.

Less than a hundred days in, the fully articulated ideological contours of his vision remain unclear—just as he wishes. It suits Obama's self-image as a mere pragmatic problem solver to never explain, to float from power grab to usurpation as if nothing but thoughtful reaction to the exigencies of the moment guides him. But it's already obvious that those actions veer strongly toward expansive government, limiting our options in every aspect of national life.

**Budget:** The government fiscal game works as well as it does politically because most people don't think of government spending in terms of control over their lives. Most see it as a benefit, a graceful solution to a perceived lack. Healthcare? Obama's approximated buy-in is \$600 billion over a decade—a figure sure to come up grossly short if history is any guide. But most think, well, I'm not the one with \$600 billion to toss, so why not?

That money, plus all the many other nonexistent trillions Obama is planning to spend, gets paid back either in debt service down the line—funneling a

larger percentage of the lifeblood, time, and effort of our children to Washington and thence to whoever's brave enough to hold U.S. debt by then—or in inflation that eats away at any attempt on our part to save or invest profitably.

When, according to the Congressional Budget Office's analysis of Obama's spending plans, the U.S. government deficit-spends \$9.3 trillion over the next decade, that's more than an absurd abstraction. It's enslavement: the hours and days of our lives.

**Business and the economy:** Here Obama's grip is far less subtle. He's clear and decisive: the financial and industrial economy is his, and he'll do with it as he pleases. What's decided for the U.S. is what's decided for General Motors, as presidential pressure pushes out GM chief Rick Wagoner. Obama and his man at Treasury, Timothy Geithner, want the power to confiscate any company whose failure they claim threatens the larger economy.

Now that he occupies the White House, the new president—who justly pilloried Bush for asserting that national security excused any executive ukase—seems to believe that his own vision of economic security empowers him to take whatever he wants and make any decision he deems necessary, from curtailing



CEO compensation to renegotiating mortgage terms. What private sector? This is economic war!

And lest one think this is all about being faithful stewards of the public wealth, as Obama and Geithner like to play it, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that an unnamed bank was not allowed to return money the Feds had stuck it with in the first bailout wave. The strings attached to those bailout funds gave the federal government effective ownership over the bank; evidently the Obama administration values an excuse for control more than it values taxpayer money.

It also seems primed to use more traditional means of throwing weight around the national economy. The president's pick for antitrust chief, Christine Varney, has already cast a stink eye at Google, expressing concern at a conference last year about the company's "monopoly in Internet online advertising." And Obama's pick to head the Department of Agriculture, former Iowa governor Tom Vilsack, is an enthusiastic supporter of one of the most foolish and damaging federal economic manipulations around, endless ethanol subsidies. Any noises about damping down agricultural subsidies in general, supposedly part of the "fiscally responsible" Obama agenda, are dying in Congress.

**State secrets:** Even Obama's most ardent supporters are disillusioned by his close adherence to the Bush model when it comes to executive privilege. Obama's DOJ has openly agreed that lawsuits challenging rendition and warrantless-wiretapping programs should be dismissed because trying them would expose state secrets. His legal team declares that the president—and only the president—has the right to make such classified decisions, with neither courts nor Congress, and of course no one as inconsequential as an aggrieved citizen, able to second guess.

That's troubling enough, but it's not all. While Attorney General Eric Holder has released some Bush-era documents relating to torture policy, the Obama administration as a whole is, as this article went to press, agonizing over whether to release a further set said to be even more heinous. (Even if they eventually release them, that this wasn't a no-brainer shows executive secrecy is still far too robust in the administration.) Even an international intellectual-property treaty being actively considered by 27 countries had its contents declared a national-security secret in an Obama DOJ filing in March.

**Healthcare:** We don't yet know what combination of mandates, subsidies, government-supplied insurance, and controls will arise. But we do know that the cornerstone of the cost containment Obama seeks will be decisions about what gets covered by the insurance that the government will be guaranteeing, regulating, and demanding. This means rationing and a potentially fatal blow to one of the last markets where expensive and experimental new treatments can be developed and, if found worthwhile, thrive.

Given how Obama has shown such a scrupulous sense of pipers and their right to call the tune in the financial and automotive markets, he is apt to be more explicit than past politicians in insisting that any behavior by companies or individuals that costs the public money must be stringently controlled. That means your health will no longer be your own business but Barack Obama's.

**Environment:** The president did not immediately get the cap-and-trade carbon program he wanted. But he is using the powers of the stimulus package and bailout legislation to establish that he can push out corporate execs

and take over any company he wants in other fields, so why not in this one, too? His executive branch seems to believe that it can legitimately claim whatever power it says it needs to achieve a goal it can halfway connect to a legitimate congressional mandate.

It is quite possible that Obama's EPA will claim authority for sweeping action under the Clean Air Act. The president of Clean Air Watch, Frank O'Donnell, told *Rolling Stone* that an EPA ruling that global warming is a public health danger "gives Obama added leverage in going to Congress. ... He can say, 'I've got this authority in my back pocket. If you torpedo cap-and-trade, I'll have no choice but to deal with this administratively.'"

**Foreign policy:** Obama claims to be on schedule to wind down our involvement in Iraq. His rosy projections of declining deficits in the out-years—the ones he doesn't have to worry about now as he tries to keep the plates of an overextended economy spinning for one more month—depend on it. But if a rising insurgency ramps up the killings of U.S. troops or other Iraqis in the last months before the supposed pullout at the end of 2011, who believes that Obama will make good on his pledge?

He has no intention of ending the Bush-era policy of imperial overreach. He's just shifting the theater in which we act out this timeless drama of collapse, with 21,000 more troops promised to Afghanistan for the potentially eternal mission of ending the Taliban insurgency there.

This survey only scratches the surface of bad actions and ominous portents for President Obama's exercise of power. His administration is as cynical about federalism as Bush's, if not more so.

Indeed, he has such a yen for creating independent centers of executive

power in the form of policy “czars” that even Democratic Sen. Robert Byrd, no advocate of restrained government, recently complained that Obama is threatening “the constitutional system of checks and balances” by giving too much independent authority to the White House outside of Senate-approved department heads. But many other Democrats in Congress are looking to extend presidential reach still further, plumping to give Obama power over the entire food production and distribution system (the proposed “Food Safety Modernization Act”) and to shut down the Internet in a “cybersecurity emergency” (the proposed “Cybersecurity Act of 2009”).

Given the realities of Obama’s practice of presidential power, his official vision seems less important. His team hasn’t yet spelled out anything as sinister as the loopholes John Yoo devised for Bush from his Office of Legal Counsel, if only because Obama’s pick for OLC, Dawn Johnsen, has had her appointment held up in the Senate, largely over her abortion views. From her record, it’s unlikely that she’ll give her boss a formalized framework of power. That’s not how Obama likes to sell himself. But just because Johnson doesn’t deliver some tortuous explanation for why the president can do whatever he wants doesn’t mean that her boss will be any more constrained than his predecessor.

For example, the Obama Justice Department’s filings in the *habeas* hearings before U.S. District Court Judge John Bates in the legal challenge by four Bagram detainees no longer relies, as Bush did, on bald declarations of inherent presidential power. But Obama’s DOJ does not therefore conclude that the president does not have the power to keep “enemy combatants” locked up indefinitely without *habeas* rights, even as Obama moves to shut down the

public-relations nightmare of Guantanamo and abandon the term “enemy combatants.”

The power Obama’s Justice Department claims might not be “inherent” any longer. But as explained by Duke Law School’s Christopher Schroeder on the website Executive Watch, Obama’s team still “argues there is ample authority to detain in the combination of the AUMF [Authorization for Use of Military Force] itself, the president’s conceded central role in executing the country’s war powers, and international law.” Those poor bastards languishing at Bagram and other mystery detention centers aren’t likely to be cheered by this supposed change in theories of executive power.

U.S. presidents have been acting outside the explicit bounds of their constitutional mandates from the Adams and Jefferson eras—Alien and Sedition Acts, Louisiana Purchase—through Lincoln, Wilson, Roosevelt, and Johnson to Bush and now Obama. The story of the decay and destruction of constitutional limits on power is as old as the Republic itself. And expansions of executive power—see Richard Nixon with his plethora of new regulatory agencies and wage and price controls—need not be combined with an explicitly developed theory that supports and encourages government metastasis.

Executive overstretch has dominated American government for so long that we usually only hear effective complaints from those fighting to oust the incumbents steamrolling our liberties at any given moment. That’s why candidate Obama was so sharp about criticizing Bush’s extraconstitutional power claims and was able to find the one war he could be unequivocally against: the one he could blame on his political opponents. Now he perpetuates the same policies, albeit under different names and with different

excuses (secrecy and “enemy combatants”) or with promises to stop them eventually (Iraq).

As predictable as out-party opposition is in-party realization that, as Obama’s right-hand man Rahm Emanuel openly put it, there’s no sense in letting a crisis go to waste. After all, the costs of classic, FDR-style “bold, persistent experimentation” are low in such crises. American presidential powerhouses have had various rationales for their abuses—from war for Lincoln, Wilson, and Bush to economic crisis for Roosevelt to playing on a wealthy society’s sense of fairness and guilt for Johnson.

Obama’s specialty is shaping up to be particularly dangerous because it’s hard to dispute given the average American’s sensibilities. No call for liberty and constitutional principle seems convincing when Obama is arguing that those relying on government giveaways should have to follow government-set rules. That is, once you’ve allowed them to go ahead with the handouts, the political game is almost over. Under the guise of “managing the taxpayers’ money,” Obama and his crew are rewriting mortgages, deciding executive compensation, tossing out CEO’s. And note carefully that his plans for where taxpayers’ money should go continue to swell, from healthcare to the environment to energy policy to expanded “national service” programs. When taxpayers’ money is everywhere—and Obama is doing his best to make sure it is—then Obama’s control is everywhere.

The Octo-potus is claiming his space and flexing his grip. As far as he’s concerned, it’s Barack Obama’s country. We’re just living in it. ■

*Brian Doherty is a senior editor at Reason and author of the books This is Burning Man, Radicals for Capitalism, and Gun Control on Trial.*



# The Rainbow Over

Post-Apartheid South Africa is not delivering the liberal dream but a nightmare of Communism and corruption.

By Peter Hitchens

"BRING ME MY MACHINE GUN!" sings the next president of South Africa in a pleasing baritone, and as the audience joins in with the catchy tune, he intones more politely the second line of the song, "Please bring me my machine gun!" Nobody actually obliges. It is the thought that counts, and the thought is worrying.

We are at an election rally of the mighty African National Congress on the sports field of Springbok, a small, rather arid town. This is almost the top left corner of the Republic of South Africa, separated from the Europeanized tourist enclave of Cape Town by hundreds of miles of brooding mountains with occasional picturesque oases of modest comfort on the way. People do not come here unless they need to. The railroad stops a long way south, at the evocatively named settlement of Bitterfontein. The highway is so sparsely used that tortoises—a mainstay of the local wildlife—occasionally succeed in getting all the way across it. Many of the local people are Namaquas, a distinctive tribe, once nomadic, now mostly not, whose lovely high-boned features look almost Chinese.

In short, this is just round the corner from nowhere.

What is the leader of a party that currently holds 72 percent of the seats in South Africa's parliament doing in such a place? He will become president on April 22 whatever the people of Springbok do. The problem is that he fears a

demoralizing snub from the voters and has good reason to. The Rainbow Nation inaugurated by Nelson Mandela is not living happily ever after, and he, Jacob Zuma, is not exactly a reassuring figure.

A breakaway party, the Congress of the People, has been doing surprisingly well here and so needs to be squashed. It will be. One of COPE's leading figures, Allan Boesak, told me that the ANC had wooed him to campaign for them. He said they assured him that money for the campaign would be readily available because they were receiving funds from Libya's Col. Muammar Gaddafi.

There is certainly cash to play with. People who turn up at the ANC rally are handed gifts of bananas and cans of cola, no small thing in a part of the world where many make their living from garbage-picking. Hundreds of people are wearing yellow T-shirts bearing Jacob Zuma's face. COPE's local officials—one says he left the ANC because he believes it has now been wholly taken over by Communists—claim that generous food parcels, supposedly government aid aimed at the poor, are being given only to ANC supporters.

These grossly cynical tactics will work, even though the discontent is real. Even up here everyone has noticed that 15 years of majority rule have largely been wasted. Like almost every South African town, Springbok still has a relatively rich, mainly white part with a steakhouse, supermarkets, and hotels

and an absolutely poor black part hidden behind one of the hills that stand all around. If the promises and hopes of "liberation" had been true, this would not be the case.

True, these days there are ways round and through the old barriers, and wealth now easily trumps skin color. The night I was there, white waitresses in the main restaurant were respectfully, even obsequiously, serving an opulent and confident party of well-dressed and powerful black Africans, probably politically connected. But most South African blacks are still very much on the bad side of the hill and likely to stay there.

It is not that nothing has been done. Comrade Zuma's motorcade—everyone is a comrade in the ANC, the last habitat of proper Stalinist politics outside the museum states of Cuba and North Korea—rolls through streets of neat new houses and past a modern high school before it bounces and jolts into a desperate zone of shacks and shanties. It parks outside the most wretched of them all, a structure mainly consisting of blue plastic sacks, whose tiny, crinkled 49-year-old occupant, Elizabeth Cloete, could easily be mistaken for 94. She makes about \$10 a week scavenging through garbage for small saleable items. Many of the people here seem—and are—permanently dazed either by cheap wine or drugs. It is hard to blame them. This is one of the many places in Africa where it seems straightforwardly wrong that

we can share the planet with such conditions and seemingly lack the power to alter them.

The president-to-be removes his black leather Stetson and goes inside Elizabeth's appalling home to do penance for the failings of the ANC. It is obviously necessary to humble himself and at least seem able to help since his party has been in power for more

Africa journalists do not speak to politicians without an appointment, and I cannot have an appointment.

This behavior is a tiny sample of the general arrogance of the ANC, an arrogance that has helped to engender a new and serious challenge to its power. More tribe than party, it has for years been the only serious political formation in supposedly democratic South

Mbeki was not much of a president, aloof and inclined to defend incompetent colleagues. But he was a smooth man, educated at a British university, European in manners, and wholly dedicated to the main task of all South African governments—keeping foreign investors happy. He was, however, scornful of Jacob Zuma. And he was viewed by the Communist Party and its allies as an obstacle. It was this combination that would eventually lever him from office.

Nelson Mandela, now a sort of global brand, has floated above the surface of politics, reassuring and dazzling outsiders who want to believe that the future is bound to be happy. He was, alas, a rather vague president, and Mbeki was perhaps not the best successor. Poor Mandela, now heading into the sunset of his days, was recently transported to an ANC rally where he more or less endorsed Jacob Zuma. Pictures and a YouTube video of this sad occasion show the old man looking used and baffled.

The Western world has assumed until now that South Africa's experiment was a complete success. This is largely because liberal opinion, which determines how most news is covered, has so very much wanted it to be so. It was vital to them that this project did not go wrong. The Left was wounded when conservatives accused them of being soft on socialist regimes in Cuba and Vietnam. South Africa, a repulsive tyranny propped up by Western conservatives, was their answer. "You do it, too," they never quite said but always meant.

The mirror image was almost complete. The Soviet Union aided the ANC with money and training. Many of its leading figures—including Jacob Zuma—spent time in Moscow or East Germany being "trained," presumably in things other than how to run a multi-party democracy with an unfettered

**WESTERN POWERS FEARED THAT THE END OF APARTHEID WOULD NECESSARILY MEAN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOVIET SATELLITE ON THE STRATEGIC SOUTHERN TIP OF AFRICA, IN POSSESSION OF ITS GOLD AND DIAMOND FIELDS AND MUCH ELSE BESIDES. THAT IS WHY THE USSR HAD TO FALL BEFORE APARTHEID DID.**

than a decade and he will shortly be in office himself. He is rather good at this sort of thing, a genuine man of the people who has been poor himself. He grew up as an unlettered herd-boy. His father, a policeman, died when he was tiny. His mother had to move away to work as a maid in a rich white person's house. Zuma's life has at no stage been easy, and it would be foolish to underestimate him. The problem is not that he is a nonentity. Anything but. The problem is what this life has made him good at.

He does not hurry away as a Western politician would have done. We wait in the heat as he absorbs the badness of the conditions. He will later say, in one of the few moments of his speech in clear, plain English, that those conditions are very bad. As he emerges from the slum, I attempt politely to speak to him, weeks of requests for interviews having been met with a silence that might mean either inefficiency or disdain. I am immediately told off by a party commissar, who gets even angrier when I ignore him and try again. It is explained to me that in the new South

Africa. All major black African factions, and some white ones, have existed inside it, keeping their disagreements more or less to themselves. Influencing all has been the Communist Party, deeply embedded and entangled in the ANC structure.

In the days of Soviet power, it happily supported every grotesque show trial, Red Army invasion, and KGB repression that was available and would have supported more if asked. Its complete devotion to the Kremlin, and its leading position in the ANC, was one of the main reasons for the long survival of the repulsive Apartheid system. Western powers feared that the end of Apartheid would necessarily mean the establishment of a Soviet satellite on the strategic southern tip of Africa, in possession of its gold and diamond fields and much else besides. That is why the USSR had to fall before Apartheid did.

Now the CP continues, extraordinarily unreconstructed. It recently had a hand in the removal of Thabo Mbeki, the former president who was driven from office in a constitutional coup last year. The politics of this are complex.

press and a free economy. Zuma later became a formidable senior officer in Spear of the Nation, the ANC's often ruthless armed wing, and questions about his conduct there remain unanswered. To this day, the ANC elite maintains close relations with regimes and movements—Havana, Libya, the PLO—that took Moscow's side in the global Cold War.

Preferring to forget this, many broadcasting organizations and newspapers, more or less dominated by left-liberal thinking, treated the final years of Apartheid South Africa as the greatest story ever told. To them, it was the truly satisfying part of the end of the Cold War. It was always implicit in their coverage—as in too much of the parallel coverage of the fall of the Iron Curtain—that all that was needed was the end of the old regime. When it did end, their approach was apocalyptic. The British Broadcasting Corporation

—especially as it affected tourists and expatriates—was sometimes mentioned, though it is far worse for the majority, living in terror of gangs in police-free shanty towns. A little was said about the curious arms deal under which South Africa—a country with no enemies except its own elite—purchased quantities of grotesquely expensive warships and airplanes. Recently, though only when the violence had reached frightening levels, it was reported that native South Africans were engaging in horrifying xenophobic riots against their brothers from the north, economic migrants who had crossed the poorly policed border in search of work.

In fact, this was and is a full-scale crisis, for which South Africa's politically correct authorities have no real solution. They are no longer ready to be ruthless at the frontier for fear of accusations of xenophobia or of the thing they charge

smooth First World freeway into the city. This is symbolically important because Cape Town, with its smart new waterfront and lavish, shaded suburbs, is the Potemkin Village of post-Apartheid South Africa. Unlike the viciously dangerous and ugly Johannesburg, where you can be robbed between the arrival lounge and the airport hotel, Cape Town tries to preserve a sense of order, civility, and optimism.

It is the stronghold of the other important opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, whose leader, Helen Zille, has proved an effective, clean, and popular mayor. There are historic reasons for this. The DA, until recently mainly white, has managed to win serious support among the confusingly named Cape Colored community, which is strong in this part of the country. Though her ancestry is in fact German, she has become impressively African. She can slip effortlessly between English and Afrikaans, the language of the “colored” community and also of the old hardline Afrikaners. Better still, she can speak fluent Xhosa, the tongue of what has until now been the most important black African grouping. It is as impressive to watch her speak as it is unimpressive to watch Jacob Zuma.

He regurgitates the leaden slogans of the ANC's Communist-trained apparatus. It is only when he sings “Bring me My Machine Gun” that he comes to life at all. It was also the only time when his audience in Springbok stopped chattering and listened to him. Zille, whom I found at a university rally in the vineyard-surrounded town of Stellenbosch, is by contrast lively, witty, and sharp. If this contest were about ideas and character instead of machines, tribes, and loyalty, she would win. She is also sensibly pessimistic, and her ambitions are limited. She has no hopes of beating the ANC's juggernaut and openly acknowl-

## **ARRIVING PASSENGERS CANNOT AVOID SEEING THE SHANTY TOWNS THAT HAVE NOW SPREAD ALMOST TO THE AIRPORT PERIMETER AND WHICH CROWD UP TO THE EDGE OF THE SMOOTH FIRST WORLD FREEWAY INTO THE CITY.**

described the long lines at voting stations in the first post-Apartheid election as “biblical”—an odd description given that there are no mass-suffrage elections in the Bible. But we knew what they meant: the liberation of the children of Israel with miracles, the annihilation of the armies of the wicked, and pillars of cloud by day and pillars of fire by night. It was, at last, the coming of Utopia. Soon afterward, the foreign coverage of what was going on in Utopia as good as stopped.

The occasional whisper emerged about the disastrous, tardy handling of HIV-AIDS and the health minister who believed beetroot was a remedy. Crime

all their critics with—racism. They know that trainloads of deportees will in most cases simply come back again. They long ago watched powerlessly as great new squatter camps erupted on the edge of the old townships, outpacing sincere but inadequate attempts to re-house the poor.

The failure is on display with embarrassing clarity at Cape Town's airport, currently being expanded to cope with tourism and the surge in traffic expected during next year's World Cup. Arriving passengers cannot avoid seeing the shanty towns that have now spread almost to the airport perimeter and which crowd up to the edge of the



edges that at this stage all she can do is begin to create a broad opposition. "The closed crony system," she warns, "leads to power abuse and eventually to a criminal state." She urges her supporters to concentrate on reducing the ANC's vote and to get the ruling party used to the idea of real democracy. Otherwise it will misuse its excessive power—something she warns "inevitably leads to Zimbabwe." Liberation movements such as the ANC, she says, make bad democratic governments because they believe their goal is to seize power. She does not say, but implies, that they have nothing in their DNA that tells them it is healthy or good to give up the power they have seized. In a world where so many politicians fail to grasp that liberty relies more on the spirit than on the letter, her clarity and good sense are heartening. The problem is that she and her message may well have come too late.

For Jacob Zuma is a living symbol of what many have feared South Africa would become. Earlier this month, he finally escaped a threat of prosecution on corruption charges—connected with the infamous arms deal—which have hung over him for many years. Alas for South African justice and the rule of the law, Zuma was not acquitted in court. The charges were cancelled by a state bureaucracy, the national Prosecuting Authority. Zuma's good friend Schabir Shaik, who was in fact convicted of corruption and imprisoned, was recently released on medical

grounds—for a procedure supposedly only available to the terminally ill, which he is not—amid howls of skeptical derision. Jackie Selebi, the national police commissioner, is famous for asking, "What's all the fuss about?" when taxed with the country's appalling levels of crime and violence. He is currently suspended, accused of having a "generally corrupt relationship" with a convicted drug smuggler and also "defeating the ends of justice."

wife we are with, another day we will have another one." He rather winningly defends his domestic arrangement by saying of his more conventional critics: "Many of them have wives, girlfriends, and children that they try to hide. I love all my wives and children and I'm proud of them, so I'm completely open about it."

He is almost wholly politically incorrect. During a trial for rape in which he was acquitted, he famously claimed to

HE LOVES TO **WEAR FULL TRIBAL GEAR, LOINCLOTH AND ALL**, THOUGH HE TENDS TO SPOIL THE EFFECT BY ENCASING HIS FEET IN **WHITE RUNNING SHOES**.

There are other portents that suggest President Zuma's inauguration will end South Africa's fanciful Rainbow dreamtime. Unlike the peaceable Westernized Xhosas Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, and unlike most of the ANC leadership so far, Zuma is a Zulu—a member of the warlike nation that humbled the British Empire at the epic battle of Isandlwana and that still remembers its ferocious past with pride. He loves to wear full tribal gear, loincloth and all, though he tends to spoil the effect by encasing his feet in white running shoes.

He is a proud polygamist, with four living wives and 18 children. He has already considered how to cope with this tricky detail when working out which of his spouses will be first lady. He explains, "There is no First Lady. If there is an occasion, one day we will have the

have avoided the danger of HIV by taking a shower afterward, which suggests that his government's policy on this problem may not be much of an advance over its predecessors' approach. He has been publicly rude about homosexuals and homosexual marriage. (He was compelled to retract.) He also hinted that he might favor a return of the death penalty.

It will be very difficult for American and European progressives to pretend that he is one of them. He is wholly and completely African, a Big Man of the traditional sort, jovial, powerful, faintly menacing, happy to be borne about in high-speed processions of big black Mercedes-Benz cars. In this he is like all too many of his brother presidents in the sad zone of lawlessness, greed, and despair that stretches northward from the banks of the Limpopo River to the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, and which South Africa was never supposed to join.

Let us hope they do not bring him his machine gun. ■

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# Depression Factory

FOR THE FINANCIAL CRISIS that has wiped out trillions in wealth, many have felt the lash of public outrage.

Fannie and Freddie. The idiot bankers. The AIG bonus babies. The Bush Republicans and Barney Frank Democrats who bullied banks into making mortgages to minorities who could not afford the houses.

But the Big Kahuna has escaped. The Federal Reserve.

“[T]he very people who devised the policies that produced the mess are now posing as the wise public servants who will show us the way out,” writes Thomas Woods in *Meltdown*. This eminently readable book traces the Fed’s role in every financial crisis since this creature was spawned on Jekyll Island in 1913.

The “forgotten depression” of 1920-21 was caused by a huge increase in the money supply for President Wilson’s war. When the Fed started to tighten at war’s end, production fell 20 percent from mid-1920 to mid-1921. Why did we not read about that depression?

Because the much maligned Warren Harding refused to intervene. He let businesses and banks fail and prices fall. Hence, the fever quickly broke, and we were off into “the Roaring Twenties.”

But the Fed reverted, expanding the money supply by 55 percent, an average of 7.3 percent a year, not through an expansion of the currency but through loans to businesses.

Thus, when the Fed tightened in the overheated economy, the Crash came, as the stock market bubble the Fed had created burst.

Herbert Hoover, contrary to the myth that he was a small-government conservative, renounced *laissez faire*, raised taxes, launched public-works projects,

extended emergency loans to failing businesses, and lent money to the states for relief programs.

Indeed, in 1932, FDR lacerated Hoover for having presided over the “greatest spending administration in peacetime in all of history.” His running mate, John Nance Garner, accused Hoover of “leading the country down the path to socialism.” And “Cactus Jack” was right.

Terrified of the bogeyman that causes Ben Bernanke sleepless nights—deflation—FDR ordered crops destroyed, pigs slaughtered, and business cartels to cut production and fix prices.

FDR mistook the consequences of the Depression—falling prices—for the cause of the depression. But prices were simply returning to where they belonged in a free market, the first step in any cure.

Obama is repeating the failed policies of Hoover and FDR by refusing to let prices fall. Obama, with his intervention to prop up housing prices, and Bernanke, with his gushers of money to bail out bankrupt banks and businesses, are creating a new bubble that will burst even more spectacularly.

The biggest myth, writes Woods, is that it was World War II that ended the Great Depression. He quotes Paul Krugman: “What saved the economy and the New Deal was the enormous public works project known as World War II, which finally provided a fiscal stimulus adequate to the economy’s needs.”

This analysis, writes Woods, is a “stupefying and bizarre misunderstanding of what actually happened.”

Undoubtedly, with 29 percent of the labor force conscripted into the Armed Forces at one time or another, and their jobs taken by elderly men, women, and teenagers with little work experience, unemployment would fall.

But how can an economy be truly growing 13 percent a year, as the economists claim, when there are shortages everywhere, declining product quality, an inability to buy homes and cars, and a longer work week? When the cream of the labor force is in boot camps or military bases, or storming beaches, sailing ships, flying planes, and marching with rifles, how can your real economy be booming?

It was 1946, a year economists predicted would result in a postwar depression because government spending fell by two-thirds, that proved the biggest boom year in all of American history.

Why? Because the real economy was producing what people wanted: cars, TV’s, homes. Businesses were responding to consumers, not the clamor of a government run by dollar-a-year men who wanted planes, tanks, guns, and ships to blow things up.

“The Fed was the greatest single contributor to the crisis that unfolds before us,” Woods writes, and “more dollars were created between 2000 and 2007 than in the rest of the republic’s history.”

After 9/11, the Fed kept interest rates low—in one year as low as 1 percent. That money flooded into the housing and stock markets. And in 2008, as the Fed tightened, the bubble burst.

Now the money supply is again expanding, to rescue us from a crisis created by the previous expansion. Of Nicholas Biddle’s Bank of the United States, the great Andrew Jackson was eloquent.

“It has tried to kill me,” he said. “But I will kill it.” And he did.

Should not this creature from Jekyll Island, for all its manifold crimes and sins against the Republic, also be summarily put to death? ■

# Neoconned Again

Discredited under Bush, the superhawks reunite for Obama.

By Michael Brendan Dougherty

AFTER SUCCESSIVE elections unseated the Republican majority and sent John McCain to defeat, neoconservatism seemed like a spent force. Francis Fukuyama wrote wistfully about life “After Neoconservatism” in 2006. Ian Buruma described the McCain campaign as the neocons’ “last stand” and harumphed that they “will not be missed.”

One would expect neoconservatives to be friendless and circumspect, grumbling about Obama’s inevitable failure as they slump away from Washington. Instead, they are jubilant, palling around with liberals again, enjoying renewed respect. Obama is their hero.

On March 31, *Weekly Standard* editor Bill Kristol, *Washington Post* columnist Robert Kagan, and senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations Dan Senor launched the Foreign Policy Initiative, the latest neoconservative think tank. Its first conference, dedicated to “Planning for Success” in Afghanistan, had the spirit of a family reunion. Sounds of backslapping and gossip filled the hall at the Mayflower Hotel. The only interruption was a slight hush as Scooter Libby passed through. The man indicted for perjury while protecting Dick Cheney deserved a special kind of respect.

Nearly every attendee, it seemed, was president of another grandly named neoconservative outfit. In one corner was Clifford May, head of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies. In another stood John Nagl, who leads the Center for a New American Security. Near him, Randy Scheunemann, the disgraced lobbyist and—bear with me—former president of the Committee for the Liberation

of Iraq, a program of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC). Around these figures revolved a constellation of young neocon wordslingers, including blogger David Adesnik, the *New Republic*’s Jamie Kirchick, and the *Standard*’s Michael Goldfarb.

In 2004, *New York Times* columnist and *Weekly Standard* alum David Brooks laughed at those who were fixated on PNAC as “full-mooners” who believe in a “Yiddish Trilateral Commission.” Brooks said the organization “has a staff of five and issues memos on foreign policy” and that the “people called neoconservatives travel in widely different circles and don’t actually have much contact with one another.” Nothing to see here.

But while organizations like PNAC and FPI may seem like little more than an e-mail list and a fax number, these small groups have been able to shape the foreign-policy debate and influence executive-branch policymakers going back to the Cold War.

Upset with the policy of détente, neocons grabbed onto Truman’s legacy and reformed the Committee on the Present Danger. Long before they served in the Bush administration, Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz were veterans of CPD. In 1981, the year it closed, Midge Decter launched the Committee for the Free World. Donald Rumsfeld became its chairman. Seven years later, he joined Wolfowitz and Perle, along with Bill Kristol and Robert Kagan, to sign PNAC’s open letter to Bill Clinton demanding that regime change in Iraq become U.S. government policy. Now Kristol and Kagan have formed FPI.

Contra Brooks, it sounds like the same people have quite a lot of contact with one another.

The first order of business at FPI was a stern warning against “isolationists.” An article, “Yes, We Can,” by Max Boot, Frederick Kagan, and Kimberly Kagan was distributed to the crowd. In the opening paragraph, the authors worry about “voices on the left and the right [who] counsel that the war is unwinnable and we need to scale down our objectives.” A panel comprised of Nagl, Robert Kagan, and the *Washington Post*’s deputy editorial page editor, Jackson Diehl, focused on defending the foreign-policy consensus that has been developing since Obama announced his decision to increase troop levels in Afghanistan.

Nagl, a major figure among national-security Democrats, longed for the days when “we used to have a bipartisan consensus in this country on foreign policy, especially when we had our sons and daughters at war.”

Kagan warned that “opportunistic” Republicans might attack the administration’s escalation of the Long War. Gushing over the new president’s strategy, he exclaimed, “Obama made a gutsy and courageous decision. ... Not only has President Obama made a commitment to Afghanistan, but a commitment to a real counterinsurgency strategy—the idea of ‘clear, hold and build.’”

The second discussion of the day called for even greater commitments of troops and resources. Frederick Kagan, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, outdid his older brother Robert in lauding the com-



mander in chief: "I fully support the president's policy as stated—and I will work as hard to make this president's policies a success as I worked to make the last president's policies a success in Iraq." His speech was almost a reassurance: different president, but we're still the ideological pitchmen.

Other highlights: Republican Congressman John McHugh provided a model of bipartisan obedience to the president—"I can only say to the president, 'Sounds good to me, boss.'" Jane Harman, a Democrat, dismissed progressives who criticized her for working with "the new neocon group" as unhelpful bloggers. Another panelist asked Obama to make clear that building a safe, non-corrupt, American-aligned Afghanistan will be a decades-long project.

But the spectacle reached the height of embarrassment when Sen. John McCain took to the stage to be interviewed by Robert Kagan. Asked how his Afghanistan policy would have differed from Obama's, McCain offered, "First—and he's doing it—you've got to emphasize how difficult this challenge will be. ... Second, I would have announced the overall addition of 10,000 more troops rather than be accused of Lyndon Johnson-style incrementalism." Note that these aren't strategic departures, but different ways of marketing the same product.

"Thirdly," McCain advised that Obama "continue to consult with Congress and with leaders on both sides of the aisle to prevent a resurgence of antiwar activity." For McCain, the great threat to American interests in Afghanistan is the possibility of dissent at home. He never specified how Congress should prevent antiwar sentiment.

Some progressive journalists standing in the back of the room were astonished. Jim Lobe, a correspondent for Inter Press Service, said that you "have to admire their agility under a new

administration." Robert Dreyfuss, a contributor to the *Nation*, could not believe the respect being accorded to Obama. "They'll turn on him. They're just so toxic," he predicted.

Perhaps not. As Senor told the *New Republic* that week, FPI began because Kristol and others had been "discouraged" by conversations they were having with members of the House GOP leadership. Republicans balked at their suggestion of increased military spending as an alternative economic stimulus plan. Senor continued, "Our objective right now is to give President Obama cover in the eyes of those who would otherwise be skeptical on the Right."

For establishment liberals, that promise sounds like proper contrition for the Bush years. And they are ready to forgive neoconservatives for everything. Many FPI attendees sported nametags that read Brookings Institution or Center for American Progress. Liberal interventionists have come to agree with Frederick Kagan that Obama "will be counting on some significant amount of support from his political opponents" to win in Afghanistan.

Progressive commentator Matthew Yglesias observed, "Neocons are out of power, but they're not being banished to the fringes of the discussion. Key progressive groups have made them the preferred interlocutors on high-profile issues." For Yglesias, this feels like a replay of the '90s, where neoconservatives guarded the Right flank of the Kosovo consensus: "By making themselves useful to Clinton and his supporters, while maintaining an appropriate level of critical distance, the neocons were able to elevate their status within the conservative coalition and emerge as a more influential faction in the W. Bush administration than they'd been in the H.W. Bush or Reagan administration." Every crisis for neoconservatism is just a new opportunity.

Dreyfuss may be right that neocons are toxic and bound to turn on Obama, but that may not happen until he is a lame duck. In general, they supported Clinton's foreign policy, especially when he clashed with noninterventionist and realist Republicans. It was only in 2000 that Bill Kristol and Robert Kagan co-authored an introductory essay to a book called *Present Dangers*, complaining that the 1990s "were a squandered decade." American leaders, they contended, should have been "preserving and reinforcing America's benevolent global hegemony" but instead "chose drift and evasion." For as long as Obama pursues an active foreign policy over the protests of noninterventionists, neoconservatives will be there to defend him.

This romance between neocons and the White House could have been predicted. Promises of a more humble foreign policy readily dissolve after the candidate becomes commander in chief. The office itself seems to bias its occupant toward interventionism, and neoconservatives have a natural affinity with the president regardless of his party affiliation. The executive branch, thickly overgrown with national security positions, continues to be a source of appointments for neoconservatives or their liberal allies—precisely because they defend a maximalist interpretation of the president's powers.

As happens every few years, Washington was turned on its head and the neocons ended up back on top. The conservatives who endorsed Obama last year in hopes of seeing change in foreign policy are long forgotten. The hawks who went hoarse trying to defeat him are celebrated by liberals as the responsible faction on the Right. There was no manipulation involved, just a minor rebranding. As easily as one Kagan steps down from the stage, another rises to take his place. So PNAC becomes FPI, and the neocons become the new Obamacons. ■

# Too Small to Fail

The William Roepke solution to our economic woes

By Dermot Quinn

IT WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO end this way. In the glory days, when you could get a house with nothing down and almost nothing to pay, anything seemed possible. A new car every year? A trip to the sun? College tuition? Watch the house balloon and let the good times roll. The recipe was simplicity itself. First you find a physicist to tell you that gravity has been abolished on Wall Street. Then you hire a banker to slice and dice your derivatives. Then you promote a political class to bless the baloney before eating it. Finally, you ask China to underwrite the debt, happy to own half your house so that you don't insist that it get its own house in order. What could go wrong?

No one noticed that when even bankers laugh all the way to the bank, something must be wrong. No one cared that multiplying derivatives is the fiscal equivalent of the miracle of the loaves and fishes. No one doubted the benediction of a political class that had been bought and paid for many times over.

But now that houses and jobs and pensions have disappeared in a puff of smoke, we remain oddly amnesiac as to the cause. The Economic Stimulus plan, the Mortgage Foreclosure Plan, the Bank Rescue Plan, the Debt Until the Crack of Doom Plan: trust me, says the president, they promised this was quite safe in the 12-step program. Then the program director asked me for some more money.

Fecklessness and stupidity are nothing new, but even by American standards of giantism this latest iteration of

boom and bust takes some beating. Yet none of it need have happened had we listened to Wilhelm Roepke. Two generations ago, when postwar Germany lay in ruins, Roepke helped to lay the foundation of its extraordinary renewal. To be sure, that postwar "miracle" owed something to American generosity, even to the very statism (in the form of the Marshall Plan) that Roepke otherwise distrusted. But in the Age of Obama, when all our calculations have gone cock-eyed, an economist who seems to know what he is doing is worth a second look. Better than that, he knew the limits of economics itself as the means and measure of human happiness.

Roepke was born in Hanover in 1899 and died in Geneva in 1966. In between, he fought in World War I, studied and taught economics in Marburg, Istanbul, and Geneva, befriended Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek, helped establish the Mont Pelerin Society, and advised Konrad Adenauer on social and monetary policy. Such a life mixed the conventional and the bizarre. No one who had known the world before 1914, he said, could fail to be horrified by how it collapsed. Where once there was "confident ease, an almost unimaginable freedom and optimism" now came a World War, crushing inflation, the Great Depression, an even more terrible war, a mushroom cloud in the east, Communism on the march. The funeral pyre of Western civilization was lit by Western man himself.

Initially, Roepke's inclinations were socialist. If the Great War was the result

of capitalist imperialism, he reckoned, the way to prevent another war was to embrace a bigger state, more planning, and loftier ambitions descending from on high. It was the standard dream of the interwar years. For the New Deal read the Five Year Plan: conceptually there was little to choose between the two.

But Roepke abandoned the dream faster than most, convinced by Mises's 1919 book *Nation, State and Economy* that most statist thinking was simply inept and crass, economically and humanly illiterate. In books such as *Economics of the Free Society*, *The Moral Foundations of Civil Society*, and *A Humane Economy*, Roepke outlined an alternative vision, attacking the "bloated colossus" of the state, the "pocket-money" world of welfare, the vanity of the clipboard crowd telling us what to do. After World War II, when everyone was a planner of one sort or another—from little Clement Attlee to ludicrous LBJ—it took courage to go against the crowd. But Roepke had plenty of courage, and besides, he never much cared for crowds anyway. Given a choice between conventional wisdom and a village reputation, he would have taken the village any day.

The key to Roepke's thinking is freedom, which he experienced before the catastrophe of 1914, thought all human beings desired and deserved, and felt sure could be recovered if certain principles of political economy were understood by those entrusted with the guardianship of the state. But his notion

of freedom was profoundly communitarian, rooted as it was in certain moral understandings of man and the good life, of human beings living together in honorable interdependence, of families being free because obliged to each other. Roepke was no libertarian any more than the Adam Smith of *The Wealth of Nations* and *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* was a libertarian. Liberty, both men knew, comes with limits, and it imposes those limits on itself. Roepke delighted in boundaries—the fence, the front door—recognizing that they make us free. Without a playpen there is no play. Without scales and minims there is no music. Roepke thus understood economics in deeply religious terms, as a kind of magnificent participation in creation itself:

What I reject in socialism is a philosophy which ... places too little emphasis on man, his nature and his personality. ... I see in man the likeness of God. I am profoundly convinced that it is an appalling sin to reduce man to a means (even in the name of high-sounding phrases) and that each man's soul is something unique, priceless, in comparison with which all other things are as naught. I am attached to a humanism which is rooted in these convictions and which regards man as the child and image of God, but not as God himself, to be idolized by a false and atheist humanism. These are the reasons why I so greatly distrust all forms of collectivism.

Notice that easily missed word: he distrusted all forms of collectivism. Roepke was an equal opportunity individualist. He feared the tendency even of capitalism to instrumentalize human beings, to turn the “market” or the “state” or “the forces of history” into things in themselves, crushing the very

freedom it claims to admire. The market is made for man, not man for the market.

Freedom, then—rightly understood as obligation—is at the core of Roepke's thought. But why should freedom work and socialism fail? Because it understands man not as an embodied appetite but as a soul. Our deepest need is not for things but for each other. He wanted a society in which

... wealth would be widely dispersed: people's lives would have solid foundations; genuine communities, from the family upward, would form a background of moral support for the individual; there would be counterweights to competition and the mechanical operation of prices; people would have roots and not be adrift in life without an anchor; there would be a broad belt of an independent middle class, a healthy balance between town and country, industry and agriculture.

An Aristotelian preference for balance and variety, a Burkean delight in the little platoons, a Chestertonian love of the local and the down-to-earth—that was Roepke.

This is all very well, you might say, but where are the economics? Actually, Roepke's technical work on credit, monopoly, the business cycle, interest rates, inflation, employment, and the gold standard was of a very high order. He could wield graphs with the best of them. He did more than complain about Keynes: he out-argued him. To be sure, he insisted on the complexity of his subject because he understood the complexity of the world it sought to explain, parting company with his Austrian colleagues when he thought they overstated the scientific side of economics. “A very inefficient way of producing vegetables,” Mises famously

remarked to him as the two men walked by some allotments after the war. Perhaps, Roepke memorably replied, “but a very efficient way of producing human happiness.”

That was his answer to economics as mere technique, as applied science. Even Madame Obama, digging for victory in the White House garden, seems to intuit the wisdom. There she is, a peasant in Prada, urging us onward to spinach Nirvana. Good for her, but even better were she and her husband to understand the point. Roepke might have helped them. The significance of that famous exchange with Mises is that Roepke was epistemologically modest, knowing that the most rational thing about rationality is that it knows its own limits. When even sensible economists forget they are dealing with human beings, we should forget them.

That insight is at the core of his economics. Roepke was appalled by the sheer vastness of the modern state, its absurd omniscience, its unerring ability to do badly what it shouldn't be doing at all. He offered, instead, the more modest proposal that self-reliance —“the individual taking care of himself and his family”—was the foundation upon which all economics and politics should be built.

We need to recover an intelligent and unapologetic localism, the kind of wisdom that sees the value of having local banks locally owned and locally answerable to local people. (Now there's an idea that might have saved us some trouble.) We need to find again “the virtues of diligence, alertness, sense of duty, reliability, and reasonableness.” Modern economic activity, Roepke proposed, “can only thrive where whoever says ‘tomorrow’ means tomorrow and not some undefined time in the future.” He believed, in other words, in telling the truth. What a strangely old-fashioned idea. I wonder if it will ever catch on.



White House approval of a surge in Afghanistan appears to be part of a strategy to stabilize the country before disengaging. While the nation-building agenda is unrealistic and likely unattainable, a security framework to facilitate the kind of limited political consensus that would permit American withdrawal might just be achievable.

A key element in this plan is the increased likelihood that Osama bin Laden will soon be killed or captured and his al-Qaeda group eliminated from its remaining bases in Pakistan. Minus bin Laden, talks with the Taliban become more acceptable from Washington's point of view. Intelligence sources report that increased Pakistani cooperation against al-Qaeda, coupled with the establishment of a network of temporary U.S. special-ops bases inside Pakistan, have produced actionable intelligence against terrorist targets.

The U.S. is also exploiting new technical capabilities to track movements in the border region using drones and satellites and believes that it has come close to killing bin Laden on at least three occasions. The improved intelligence is the principal reason that drone attacks against Pakistan have increased under President Obama. They are viewed as the most effective means of eliminating al-Qaeda. Though publicly complaining, the Pakistani government agrees and has sanctioned the operations in the belief that it is in Islamabad's interest to destroy al-Qaeda and the Pakistani Taliban that serves as its chief supporter.

A recent demonstration of these enhanced U.S. capabilities occurred after Pakistani Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud declared on March 31 that he was behind the successful suicide attack on the police academy in Lahore the previous day. He also stated that his organization would attack Washington to punish the United States for a series of drone attacks on his followers earlier this year. Mehsud, who had Pakistani presidential candidate Benazir Bhutto assassinated, is thought to be the de facto leader of what remains of al-Qaeda. Intelligence sources believe that he has given both Osama bin Laden and Ayman Zawahiri refuge in safe houses located in Waziristan, the area in Pakistan's tribal region that he controls. He has threatened to attack the United States before, but no one believes that he and al-Qaeda have the capability to launch such a strike.

Mehsud's boasting was answered within 24 hours. On April 1, a CIA drone fired two missiles at a Waziristan safe house associated with Mehsud, killing 12 people and wounding several others. The United States was able to track suspected insurgents to their safe house, target it, and destroy it, sending a clear message to Mehsud. Osama bin Laden was not directly targeted in the operation, but Pakistani intelligence sources believe that Mehsud is running out of secure locations for his distinguished guests, and it is only a matter of time before bin Laden and Zawahiri are killed.

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For that, surely, is the real "credit crisis," the crisis in credibility that has shaken our world to its core. Truth from our political masters, from our bankers, from our brokers: have you heard much of it lately? Instead, we have had only lies—that too much borrowing requires even more borrowing; that some banks are too big to fail; that we have a moral duty to subsidize the feckless; that a bigger state means a better life. Any society that lies to itself so systematically and so seductively is doomed to fail. That failure, dear reader, is all around you.

The good news is that it could be worse. The bad news is that it will be worse. Of all the mischiefs that arise from financial prodigality, Gladstone wrote over a century ago, none is more dangerous than the fact that "they creep onwards with a noiseless and a stealthy step... they commonly remain unseen and unfelt until they have reached a magnitude absolutely overwhelming." There is our story in a nutshell. And how do we propose to resolve our current mischief? With even more financial prodigality, with one last bender to bring us to our senses. Sound money? I like the sound of that, says our clownish commander in chief. Let's print lots and lots of it.

Gladstone died the year before Roepke was born. A way of life died a few years later. Roepke's world collapsed in August 1914. Our world collapsed in September 2008. Both, we can now see, were doomed long before they fell. Out of the ruins what shall we build? Another Tower of Babel, another building too big to fail? Perhaps, if we are wise, we might try smallness for a change. Happiness happens that way. ■

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# Unsafe at Any Speed

Once again, the new administration has demonstrated its conviction that fidelity to free-trade dogma trumps all other concerns, including border security, highway

safety, and the interests of American labor. The recent omnibus budget bill included a provision stripping all funding for a pilot program started in 2007 to permit Mexican trucks to travel throughout the United States in accordance with the North American Free Trade Agreement. While President Obama signed the bill, he has since bowed to domestic criticism and retaliatory Mexican tariffs, and Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood has promised to revive an alternative version of the program.

Under a rule established by the Clinton administration in 1995, Mexican trucks had been limited to within 25 miles of the border, where their cargo had to be transferred to American trucks for delivery throughout the rest of the country. The Mexican government has resented this restriction and lobbied to end it, arguing that NAFTA requires full access to the U.S. market. The Bush administration, always keen to satisfy requests from south of the border, won support for a trial run at expanding Mexican trucking access over the strenuous objections of pro-labor Democrats and conservative dissenters such as Duncan Hunter and Ron Paul.

Despite the latter's opposition to the pilot program in the past, neither voted for the larger spending bill to which the defunding provision was attached. The responsibility for temporarily killing the program rested primarily with North Dakota Democratic senator Byron Dorgan, who has distinguished himself as a leading critic of our trade policies

and was one of the Democratic senators instrumental in quashing "comprehensive immigration reform." In the 111th Congress, Dorgan has many new Blue Dog and moderate Democratic allies ready to take advantage of the electorate's increasing interest in economic populist measures. This could help the majority head off a midterm backlash against the big-spending fiscal legislation they have been backing.

Beyond the basic concerns about highway safety and ensuring that Mexican trucks meet regulatory standards required of American trucks, providing unfettered admission to the United States

**THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION, ALWAYS KEEN TO SATISFY REQUESTS FROM SOUTH OF THE BORDER, WON SUPPORT FOR EXPANDING MEXICAN TRUCKING ACCESS.**

will undermine our efforts to combat drug and human trafficking. In light of the increased violence wrought by drug cartels on the border cities and the broader problems of corruption and official collusion with dealers in Mexico, it would be foolish to make American cities outside the border zone more vulnerable to the effects of our misguided drug war.

Along with organized labor, the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers' Association, the largest group of its kind in the country, has called for an indefinite suspension of the pilot program. This should serve as a warning to Republicans that they have again allowed the Left to outflank them and stake out the popular (and correct) position.

As with the "Buy American" provisions in the stimulus legislation earlier this year, allegations of protectionism coming from the GOP are making a badly damaged party seem even more disconnected from the public—indeed, from many of its own voters. A June 2008 Rasmussen survey found that 56 percent of Americans believe NAFTA should be renegotiated, a view shared by a large plurality of Republicans, 49-22 percent. And this was before the full onset of the financial crisis.

One of the least appreciated causes of Republican failure in the last two election cycles, especially in the Midwest, has been the refusal of party leaders to modify their views on trade policy, which put them more at odds with public opinion than perhaps any other policy besides the war in Iraq.

The Obama administration will be making a mistake if it follows through on its pledge to start a new Mexican trucking program. But it is unlikely to pay much of a price as long as the GOP continues to identify itself as the party of free trade. Unlike 1994, when Clinton suffered electoral repudiation partly because of his embrace of NAFTA, Republicans are not going to be able to exploit the public's dissatisfaction with the president's party unless they change their tune.

If they continue to support the pilot program and insist on stringently applying the requirements of NAFTA, the Republican Party may remain out of power for years to come—and with good reason. ■

# Peace Out

With Obama in office, liberals learn to love war.

By Justin Raimondo

THE ANTIWAR RALLY at the University of Iowa was sparsely attended. The below 30 degree weather might have had something to do with it, but Paul Street, a local writer and one of the speakers, had another theory, as the *Daily Iowan* reported:

Before the crowd of fewer than 20, Street questioned why the 'left' locals and university officials aren't doing more to help in the protests against the war. 'The big truth right now, whether this town's missing-in-action progressives get it or not, is that we need to fight the rich, not their wars,' he said, citing big corporations for wasting their technology and funding on war.

The big truth is that the antiwar movement has largely collapsed in the face of Barack Obama's victory: the massive antiwar marches that were a feature of the Bush years are a thing of the past. Those ostensibly antiwar organizations that did so much to agitate against the Iraq War have now fallen into line behind their commander in chief and are simply awaiting orders.

Take, for example, Moveon.org, the online activist group that ran antiwar ads during the election—but only against Republicans—in coalition with a group of labor unions and Americans Against Escalation in Iraq. Behind AAEI stood three of Obama's top political operatives, Steve Hildebrand, Paul Tewes, and Brad Woodhouse. Woodhouse is now the Democratic National Committee's director of communications and research. He controls the massive e-mail list culled by

the Obama campaign during the primaries and subsequently, as well as a list of all those who gave money to the presumed peace candidate. These donors are no doubt wondering what Obama is doing escalating the war in Afghanistan and venturing into Pakistan.

As Greg Sargent noted over at WhoRunsGov.com, a *Washington Post*-sponsored site, "Don't look now, but President Obama's announcement today of an escalation in the American presence in Afghanistan is being met with mostly silence—and even some support—from the most influential liberal groups who opposed the Iraq War."

In response to inquiries, Moveon.org refused to make any public statement about Obama's rollout of the Af-Pak escalation, although someone described as "an official close to the group" is cited by WhoRunsGov as confirming that "MoveOn wouldn't be saying anything in the near term." A vague promise to poll their members was mentioned—"though it's unclear when." Don't hold your breath.

Another Democratic Party front masquerading as a peace group, Americans United for Change, declined to comment on the war plans of the new administration. This astroturf organization ran \$600,000 worth of television ads in the summer of 2007, focusing like a laser on congressional districts with Republican incumbents. Change? Not so fast.

The boldest of the peacenik sellouts, however, is Jon Soltz of VoteVets, described by WhoRunsGov as "among the most pugnacious anti-Iraq war groups." They came out fists flying, endorsing the escalation of the Long War.

According to Soltz, there is "much to like in the plan," but his faves boil down to three factors, which supposedly represent "a stark departure" from the bad old days of the Bush administration. He applauds the administration's recognition that "The military can't do it all." Yet we're increasing the troop levels by some 17,000, plus 4,000 trainers to babysit the barely existent Afghan "army." We're going to send thousands more civilians—aid workers, medical personnel, and military contractors—to build the infrastructure lacking in Afghan society and promote fealty to the central government in Kabul. Schools, clinics, roads, and shopping malls will be built with American tax dollars in order to foster trust between the Afghans, their occupiers, and their government.

This nation-building strategy is at the core of the new counterinsurgency doctrine championed by Gen. David Petraeus and hailed by the policy wonks at the Center for a New American Security—the source of many Obama administration appointees at State and the civilian upper echelons of the Pentagon—as the key to victory on the Af-Pak front. Yet this scheme seems no less grandiose, in terms of its scope, than the "democracy building" campaign of the neocons, who set out to effect lasting change in the political landscape in the region. The Obamaites are much more ambitious: they seek to transform the economic and social landscape.

Another factor in the Obama Af-Pak war plan that appeals to Soltz and his fellow VoteVets is that "though it's the



'war in Afghanistan,' we need to treat it like a region." Translation: Don't be surprised when Obama's war spreads beyond Afghanistan's borders. "This is a regional problem," Soltz solemnly avers, "that requires a regional solution." Imagine if George W. Bush had gone "regional" and announced that he was going to include Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, and Iran in his plan to "liberate" Iraq? Soltz and his sometime peacenik buddies would have gone ballistic, denouncing this "escalation" of the conflict and demanding that we pull back. Yet the rules for the Af-Pak region are apparently quite different because, after all, this is Barack Obama doing the escalating.

Soltz doesn't confront the obvious arguments against the Af-Pak plan: How is this different from the occupation of Iraq? Aren't we creating more enemies by bombing hapless Pakistani villagers with drones? What about Afghanistan and Pakistan's neighbors, notably Russia—do we really want to add them to our enemies list, as they respond with distrust to our feeding of this fire on their frontiers?

Soltz never answers these questions because he never bothers to ask them. He merely assumes the perfect justice and practicality of Obama's Afghan cause. He is a soldier following orders. Like the neoconized Republican cadre that hooted down Ron Paul as he rose to challenge the Bush foreign policy during the GOP presidential primary debates, a similarly brainwashed Democratic base is now cheerleading their leader and shouting down dissenters even as this White House repeats—and enlarges—the mistakes of the previous occupant.

The Center for American Progress, a liberal-Left think tank that sheltered many foreign-policy analysts who opposed the Iraq War and was beginning to develop a comprehensive critique of global interventionism, has recently

issued a report on Afghanistan that includes a number of short-term, medium-term, and long-term (ten-year) goals, including among the latter:

- Assist in creating an Afghan state that is able to defend itself internally and externally, and that can provide for the basic needs of its own people.
- Prepare for the full military withdrawal from Afghanistan alongside continued diplomatic and economic measures to promote the sustainable security of Afghanistan.

Simply substitute Iraq for Afghanistan, and what we get is the war policy of the Bush era. That the center is run by John Podesta, who served as Obama's transition chief, is perhaps explanation enough for the complete turnaround. One wonders, however, if the center's more anti-interventionist scholars, such as Matthew Yglesias, whose popular blog has attracted a substantial audience, will be forced to toe the new line—or be forced out.

One also wonders when this administration will decide to let the American people in on the news that the Af-Pak war is slated to last at least a decade, if not more. During the campaign, and well before that, Joe Biden was self-righteously denouncing the Bush administration and its journalistic amen corner for not "leveling with the American people" and admitting the magnitude of our commitment in Iraq. Yet the administration of which he is now part is just as evasive on the question of an exit strategy and timeframe in Afghanistan and now Pakistan.

Biden's counsel of restraint apparently lost out in the internal debate, and the Hillary-Gates escalators triumphed. It is inconceivable that the vice president would go public with his criticisms—he's no Cheney. And opposition among the Democrats in Congress is low-key, minimal, and effectively marginalized.

A recent headline in *The Hill* tells the whole sad story: "Anti-war Democrats remain silent about Obama's policies." A pow-wow between Barbara Lee, famous for her lone opposition in Congress to the Afghan war early on, Lynn Woolsey, and Maxine Waters, California Democrats and vocal opponents of "Bush's war," failed to produce a joint statement on Obama's Afghan surge.

Divided and distracted by the economic crisis, the antiwar caucus in Congress is effectively dissolved, although a few voices are raised in warning and protest: we are headed for "a war without end," said Congressman James McGovern (D-Mass.), who seems to have learned the real lesson of the Iraq War—that occupation produces more enemies than it subdues.

Russ Feingold says that Obama's war plan "could make the situation worse, not better." More ominous for the administration is the criticism coming from Sen. Carl Levin over the \$1.5 billion nonmilitary aid package for Pakistan, which Levin fears could be seen as a bribe—and an insult. He also wonders why the Pakistanis allow the Taliban to operate openly in the city of Quetta and questions their interest in policing the Afghan border.

There is also a rising tide of criticism coming from the Democratic base: visitors to the liberal website Dailykos.com are likely to encounter antiwar screeds nearly as impassioned as those that were posted during the Bush years, albeit written in sadness and bewilderment rather than anger.

Within the organized antiwar movement itself, the Democratic Party fronts like Moveon.org and VoteVets are increasingly isolated as more representative groups shift to the forefront: "It's a shame President Obama believes he can pursue the same militaristic strategy as his predecessors and produce a different result," says Kevin Martin, executive

director of Peace Action. Tom Andrews, executive director of Win Without War, takes a similar stance:

I regret that President Obama, in his desire to protect our nation from a genuine threat, has outlined a policy that will undermine our security, not enhance it. In short, the president's policy is playing into the hands of Al Qaeda and the Taliban by providing them with a cause that unites and strengthens them.

This is precisely correct, and it echoes what Michael Scheuer, the former CIA officer and chief of the Agency's bin Laden unit, says in *Imperial Hubris*:

U.S., British, and other coalition forces are trying to govern apparently ungovernable postwar states in Afghanistan and Iraq, while simultaneously fighting growing Islamist insurgencies in each—a state of affairs our leaders call victory. In conducting these activities, and the conventional military campaigns preceding them, U.S. forces and policies are completing the radicalization of the Islamic world, something Osama bin Laden has been trying to do with substantial but incomplete success since the early 1990s. As a result, I think it fair to conclude that the United States of America remains bin Laden's only indispensable ally.

Those words were written in 2004, and since then nothing has changed: we are still acting as bin Laden's greatest recruiter and ally. Scheuer's is the classical realist view, which makes American interests, narrowly conceived, the central organizing principle and starting point of a rational foreign policy.

During the Bush era, there was a growing convergence of Republican

realists and antiwar liberals. Yet in the age of Obama, it seems, many of the latter are getting in touch with their inner hawk.

President Obama is often compared to FDR or John F. Kennedy, but I agree with Katrina vanden Heuvel, editor of *The Nation*, who worries that he's more likely to turn out to be another Lyndon Baines Johnson—a president who triumphed against a perceived warmonger at the polls and embodied liberal hopes on the domestic scene but was then

driven from office by a war-weary electorate and an insurgency within his own party. Add a rapidly expiring economy at home to an increasingly unpopular war—or series of wars—abroad, and you have a recipe for disaster: Obama's Vietnam and the Democratic Party's Waterloo. ■

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## Keynesian Cons

Much as the supply-siders rail against economic stimulus, they buy the basic argument.

**By Sheldon Richman**

KEYNESIAN ECONOMICS is back. Government spending to stimulate the economy is all the rage and has won the day in Congress. Of course, conservatives are uneasy. "It's hardly a secret that Obama is a Keynesian and that he is staggeringly untroubled by the consistent failures of Keynesian policy before and since the New Deal," David Limbaugh writes at Townhall.com. Dick Morris and Eileen McGann add, "There are very few economists who really buy into Keynesian theory anymore. Instead, the idea of 'rational expectations' has taken its place. The difference between the two approaches is essential to understanding why Obama's stimulus package won't work."

Indeed, you would be hard-pressed to find a conservative who admits to being an orthodox Keynesian, conservatives having joined the Church of the Supply Side many years ago. But though Keyne-

sianism tends to be associated with big-government "liberalism"—in its original form, liberalism stood for small government in all realms—many who take Keynes's approach to economics are nevertheless self-identified conservatives. In practice, "conservative Keynesian" is not a contradiction in terms.

What is a conservative Keynesian? While there may not be a formal definition—mainstream Keynesianism has many nuanced variations—it is fair to say that a conservative Keynesian 1.) looks at the world in terms of macroeconomic aggregates, that is, total output, total employment, and most especially aggregate demand; 2.) sees government fiscal policy as a way to improve those aggregates; and 3.) embraces or at least tolerates deficit spending and inflation in the short run. That much is pretty close to standard Keynesianism. What makes one a Keynesian of the Right is a

preference for tax cuts over government spending, although the intention is the same: to put money into the hands of consumers as a way to increase aggregate demand during recessions.

George W. Bush was a model conservative Keynesian. After 9/11, he urged us to shop to keep the economy from falling into a recession. He was also responsible for the 2008 tax rebate—remember those \$300 stimulus checks?—which was based on the theory that putting money into people's hands would boost consumer spending and nip recession in the bud. (It didn't.)

An astonishing number of the Republicans' most cherished economic thinkers can be called Keynesians. According to Austrian economist Murray Rothbard, former Fed chairman Alan Greenspan "is, like most other long-time Republican economists, a conservative Keynesian, which in these days is almost indistinguishable from the liberal Keynesians in the Democratic camp. In fact, his views are virtually the same as Paul Volcker, also a conservative Keynesian. Which means that he wants moderate deficits and tax increases, and will loudly worry about inflation as he pours on increases in the money supply."

Another of these influential Republican economists is Martin Feldstein, a Harvard professor of economics who was President Reagan's chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers. While Feldstein was a critic of the growing deficit in the Reagan years, today he supports government spending to promote economic recovery. Writing in the *Washington Post* in October 2008, Feldstein argued that falling home prices are "causing consumers to cut spending, leading to lower employment, lower incomes, and further cuts in consumer spending. Other components of aggregate demand are also falling. The decline in consumer spending will lead

to less business investment in plants and equipment."

Tax cuts wouldn't work, he said: "The only way to prevent a deepening recession will be a temporary program of increased government spending. ... A fiscal package of \$100 billion is not likely to be large enough to revive the economy." In true Keynesian fashion, he added, "While it would be good if some of the increased spending also contributed to long-term productivity, the key is to stimulate demand." In other words, it really doesn't matter how the government spends the money. (Keynes said the same: even building pyramids and digging holes would do.)

A few months later, Feldstein made it clear what kind of conservative Keynesian he is: a military Keynesian. (Anyone who thinks World War II ended the Great Depression is a military Keynesian.) In the *Wall Street Journal*, Feldstein wrote,

As President-elect Barack Obama and his economic advisers recognize, countering a deep economic recession requires an increase in government spending to offset the sharp decline in consumer outlays and business investment that is now under way. ... A temporary rise in DOD spending on supplies, equipment and manpower should be a significant part of that increase in overall government outlays. The same applies to the Department of Homeland Security, to the FBI, and to other parts of the national intelligence community.

He even added a Keynesian protectionist twist: "Military procurement has the further advantage that almost all of the equipment and supplies that the military buys is made in the United States, creating demand and jobs here at home." Feldstein's plan was not only to

help end the recession but to strengthen the American empire.

On the less sophisticated end of the conservative Keynesian spectrum is Michael Gerson, *Washington Post* columnist and former speechwriter and senior policy adviser to President George W. Bush. According to Gerson, while the stimulus bill that emerged from Congress was "deeply flawed," it had a "hidden virtue":

A good portion of the funding is channeled to the poor through programs such as food stamps, unemployment insurance, the child tax credit and the earned-income tax credit. This has a humanitarian justification—unskilled workers and minorities are hurt first and hardest by unemployment. But a focus on the poor has an additional economic justification. Dollars given to the middle class during uncertain economic times are likely to be saved—particularly when the middle class calculates (not unreasonably) that current government largess may require future tax increases. Assistance provided to the poor, in contrast, is used immediately for necessities.

Gerson thus shares the Keynesian animosity toward saving, not realizing that saving is in fact an alternative form of spending—on capital goods and labor, which makes possible the economic restructuring needed after a government-induced asset bubble has burst.

Perhaps the most interesting conservative who has embraced Keynes, albeit critically, is Bruce Bartlett, a *Forbes* columnist and author of *Impostor: How George W. Bush Bankrupted America and Betrayed the Reagan Legacy*. In his recent column "Does Stimulus Stimulate?" he revisited the Great Depression, especially the secondary depression

that began in 1937, when Franklin Roosevelt raised taxes and cut spending and the Federal Reserve (again) contracted the money supply. “The result was an economic setback that didn’t really end until both monetary and fiscal policy became expansive with the onset of World War II,” he wrote. “At that point, no one worried any more about budget deficits, and the Fed pegged interest rates to ensure that they stayed low, increasing the money supply as necessary to achieve this goal. It was then and only then that the Great Depression truly ended.” In another article, Bartlett wrote, “[I]n terms of fiscal policy [before war spending kicked in], Roosevelt’s error wasn’t that he spent too much, but that he didn’t spend nearly enough.”

Through war spending, in other words, the Keynesian recipe got the economic cake to rise again. In *Depression, War, and Cold War*, however, economic historian Robert Higgs documents that in fact war spending did not end the Depression, if by that term we mean not merely a depressed GDP but depressed living standards. Nevertheless, Bartlett insists, “[E]conomists concluded that an expansive monetary and fiscal policy, which had been advocated by economist John Maynard Keynes throughout the 1930s, was the key to getting out of a depression. Keynes was right...”

The problem, Bartlett adds, was that Keynes’s followers thought this policy was appropriate outside of a depression. When it was tried in the 1960s and ’70s, we got inflation. That made economists shy away from countercyclical policies—another error. Bartlett now contends that since we are in a Keynesian “liquidity trap” (in which interest rates are already so low that monetary policy alone is impotent), we need fiscal stimulus. “In the short run, the case for stimulus is overwhelming. ... The trick is to front-load the stimulus as much as possible while putting in

place policies that will tighten both fiscal and monetary policy next year.” Because speed is of the essence and because government spending will be hard to curtail later, he prefers stimulus through tax policy.

In 2004, Bartlett declared in *National Review Online*, “Keynes developed his theories in the 1930s precisely in order to save capitalism.” He said this of the same man who wrote, “I conceive, therefore, that a somewhat comprehensive socialisation of investment will prove the only means of securing an approximation to full employment,” who praised state socialism for its “courage [to engage in] bold experiments,” and who found the free market obnoxious because it is based on the “money-motive.”

We might dub Bartlett a supply-side Keynesian, and he would not be the only one. In 2008, conservative economics commentator Lawrence Kudlow recalled that when he went to work for President Ronald Reagan in 1981,

One of the architects of supply-side economics, Columbia University’s Robert Mundell, [said] that during periods of crisis, sometimes you have to be a supply-sider (tax rates), sometimes a monetarist (Fed money supply), and sometimes a Keynesian (federal deficits). I’ve never forgotten that advice. Mundell was saying: Choose the best policies as put forth by the great economic philosophers without being too rigid.

Perhaps the first supply-side Keynesian was Lord Keynes himself. According to Bartlett, Keynes wrote, “Nor should the argument seem strange that taxation may be so high as to defeat its object, and that, given sufficient time to gather the fruits, a reduction of taxation will run a better chance than an increase of balancing the budget.”

This shouldn’t surprise us too much. Keynes, according to New York University economist Mario Rizzo, lost confidence in countercyclical government spending in the late 1930s. The Keynesians have yet to catch up with their master.

That supply-siders can also be Keynesians may seem paradoxical: in the 1970s and ’80s, supply-side economics arose in rebellion against Keynesianism. Keynesians tended to be concerned with demand and its effect on employment. If the economy was in recession, the solution was to increase demand through government spending. This, it was said, would stimulate investment and employment.

The supply-siders responded by invoking the great classical economist J.B. Say, who argued in effect that if the supply side of the economy is thriving, demand takes care of itself. This is because supply *is* demand. When someone produces a good in a modern economy, it’s because he wants to trade it—through the medium of money—for something else. Ultimately goods trade for goods. The more that’s produced, the more that’s demanded. Say’s critics who render his law as “supply creates its own demand” set up a straw man. As James Gwartney writes in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*, “Virtually all economists accept this proposition and therefore are ‘supply siders.’”

A second, more prominent aspect of supply-side economics is the belief that high marginal tax rates reduce the incentive to work and encourage tax avoidance. The flipside is that cutting marginal rates produces higher revenues for the government (as Keynes seems to have believed, too).

Despite their differences, conservative Keynesians and supply-siders can resemble each other. In a recession a conservative Keynesian could favor a

*Continued on page 34*



# Vile Bodies

Pumped-up muscles, empty souls

By Reid Buckley

WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE to invent a more stupefying supper companion than the person obsessed with keeping himself in Phidian perfection of pecs, abs, and buttocks, to the exclusion of mind and spirit?

I am speaking of people so frenzied by the infantile desire to cheat time that they become infatuated with their bodies, worshiping them as ancient Hebrews in the desert fell before the golden calf. Are there more narcissistic human beings?

Tally up the bores one encounters on a regular basis. Basketball fans, baseball fans, Red Sox fans (in that order). Recent enthusiasts (of anything). Recent converts (to anything). Potheads. Stockbrokers and those who have gone broke on stocks. A roomful of young mothers describing childbirth in the gruesome detail of which they seem never to tire. Candidates for any office. Merlot addicts. Fat people who talk about the latest diet, which plainly does not work because they are piggish. Anxious parents who fret about whether their children are getting a proper education in the public schools, when plainly they are not and are destined to grow up mirror images of their ma and pa, devoid of interest, wit, or culture. Earnest sorts who wonder what this world is coming to when it is plainly already here. Supercilious scolds of the Richard Dawkins or Christopher Hitchens ilk who never let pass an opportunity to scoff at the primitive superstitions of believers.

These are trial sufficient, but to the half-mad self-absorption of exercise fad-dicts I prefer even environmental fanatics of the Al Gore variety, though these,

in their obnoxious superiority, vie with the God-is-dead crowd. All share personality traits. The first is evangelistic fervor. Nothing else is of interest, the world go hang. The second is the argumentative insistence of fanatics. They won't shut up. The third is certitude. They are the saved. Their self-righteousness rivals President Obama's.

The fitness craze is simply another escape from the consequences of metaphysical ignorance—an attempt to flee time and space and the inevitability of inexorable, unstoppable, uncamo-flagable aging. One pities them: they are doomed to the disintegration of the mortal frame in which they take such pride and invest such complacent hope, doomed to the eventual rotting of their poor flesh—cold to the touch, loathsome to the sight, offensive to all the yet living: disgusting, putrid, worm-ridden, foul.

What a charnel house dialectic. Despite the certainty of their fate, fitness freaks devote hour after hour to strenuous exertion, torturing their bodies, sweat pouring rank from their armpits. Zombies walking, walking to nowhere. They never reach the top of the treadmill, not once.

This is self-inflicted, remember. They willfully pit themselves against the logical imperative—nothing can be forever if God cannot be—enslaving themselves to the absurd. The horizon never changes, the pounding of their feet never ceases, no glorious alpine vista is ever attained, from which rolls out an irenic Swiss valley, dotted with placidly cud-chewing milch cows. Their sole reward seems to be scrutinizing them-

selves in the mirror, admiring the sleekness of their pelts, the washboard ripple of their abs ... but oh! screwing up their brows at the slightest slackness of a tricep, which they determine to flog that very morning in the gym.

How they have reduced the joys, opportunities, dreams, adventures, and poetry of life to the ridiculous yoke of their fitness, which is an existential delusion. They cannot avoid the grave. Stare into it long as they wish, curse the heavens, they cannot cheat the awful avidity of its hunger. They are subject to the astrophysical nothingness of entropy, but during their short hour of strutting and fretting, they devote their entire spirits to that which is most awfully mortal.

Should not decent, cool, intelligent, discriminating society shun these freaks as one would the plague? Or are we, being obedient to the demands of Christian charity, condemned to put up with bores? (In the dreadful simplicity of the postmodern *weltanschauung*, are bores no longer recognized? It's quite possible that people in Hollywood enjoy each other's company, after all.)

I propose that fitness fanatics, whose company in numbing doses engenders sociopathy in their victims, not be stoned in public, not be committed to the stocks (they'd simply continue berating passersby, sigh!), not be obliged to listen to one more economic nostrum from Charles Schumer, nor even be waterboarded in Guantanamo. All too dreadfully crude. They should simply (and humanely) be stripped of the franchise. Civilization must take a stand against primitivism in whatever guise—tight

pecks, flat abs, or sexy buttocks.

But I am advised by friends that depriving narcissists of the franchise is extreme, undemocratic, impractical politically, and anyhow does not solve the problem. Disenfranchisement will not keep such folk from sounding off. Social opprobrium no longer computes. When last was a person evicted from a high-priced restaurant because he shaves his cheeks and chin in the slovenly fashion of Iran's Ahmadinejad or consumes his food wolfishly? When last was a person tossed from a morning news show because he is a perfect fool? If this were Heaven, anyone lacking a sense of humor would be struck dumb. Anyone lacking originality of mind would have his tongue cut out. But we are not living in paradise. We are groaning here on earth, and we are trapped in the 21st century, an age from which civility has been banished on all levels of social intercourse, high and low. Civilized people are deprived of defense. Stripping obnoxious fellow citizens of the vote does not remove them from parlors or bars or restaurants.

So what is to be done with this particularly repellent breed of narcissist? The only recourse available to us, I fear, is developing the ability to recognize them from afar and thus avoid them. There are tribal characteristics of the fitness freak. They are, of course, lean. In middle age, their sinews are stringy, and one can spot them at a distance. Not all slim or even fit people, however, belong to the obsessive caste. Many people exercise in moderation. They work out as a sort of penance for gorging on key lime pie or remarking, uncharitably, on how the notion of discussing poetry with Nancy Pelosi is as attractive as the idea of going out on a toot with Harry Reid.

Female fitness freaks are more immediately distinguishable than their male counterparts. They tend to drop their particples, which, I suppose, on a moral scale is better than dropping their panties. Though female fitness freaks

may be ardent feminists on the surface, deep down they are traitors to their sex. Remember, they have broken into what had previously been a man's world. They speak roughly, littering their sentences with obscene expletives like the confetti from yesterday's St. Patrick's Day parade, sodden and blackened with city grit. That's how they imagine the boys speak. Their hair is stringy from frequent sweating and wetting. They wear pants cinched tightly at the waist, doing nothing for their bottoms, and, when not shod for running, the sensible shoes formerly associated with English governesses. Whenever these women pass by one gets a whiff not of Chanel No.5 but of kennels or failing marriages. They despise young, pretty, sensual women who lie in bed a-mornings sucking on sweetmeats and thinking of men, whom, to get, these damsels need not become.

Both sexes of fitness freaks speak of themselves as obsessively as horse and dog people speak of their animals. These also are a kind a cultural Kalarhara. Their periodicals feature pictures of themselves at meets or field trials and, of course, pictures of the idols they have laid up for themselves. They have nothing of interest to say to anyone. This is an accomplishment of sorts. How many people can boast that they are utterly barren of intellectual heft? They speak of nothing more compelling than their animals, which are in most cases handsomer, kinder, more loyal, and, yes, more interesting than their masters.

Children play the same role in the glandular self-satisfaction of the bourgeois Southern matron. In one's most distraught dreams, can one imagine more devastatingly dreary company? Wives of New South McMansion dwellers, Tara on three quarters of an acre, with thousands of superfluous square feet to shout the inflated measure of self-worth. When dog and horse people speak obsessively of their animals, they are in fact—like

these women dilating on their children—speaking of themselves. Their charges are mere extensions of their own being, which is why they are of such consuming fascination.

Fitness freaks use their bodies for the same purpose—as a way of making certain that all social interaction is centered on them. Don't imagine for a moment when a horse nut is glowing over the virtues of his mount in a recent fox hunt or when a canine fanatic is extolling the brilliance of his Labrador in completing a triple-blind retrieve in a field trial that he is actually speaking of the animal. The beast is merely a means of socializing the dog or horse person's self-absorption. In the same way, one notices that fitness fanatics objectify their bodies, speaking of them in the third person. Couldn't get the old carcass going this morning, heh-heh.

This is not the rant of a curmudgeon. I am not grown old and bitter in my biases. When I compare species of American narcissists such as dog and horse people, Southern society matrons, fitness fanatics, and other menaces, I am speaking of obsessed human beings. There is little left of the human in their beings. Consider their disinterest in any subject of conversation removed from their obsession. They listen distractedly. The same goes for political junkies. Witness the impatience of Laura Ingraham as she lets a liberal have his say—her attitude plainly conveys that she has heard it all before and that it is infinitely tiresome to her.

The ego is the devil here, for they cannot free themselves from themselves. In this self-indulgent society, beyond ourselves, our desires, our wants, the itch in our pants or in our palms, nothing is of concern. Our culture is as obscene as we are obese. Do you know why Steven Weinberg and Leonard Susskind and others despise the notion of a Creator? It is because by definition He is greater than they, from which follows—it is as fell a

## — OLD AND RIGHT —

descent in logic as the cast of an expert fly fisherman into an eddy of a fast-flowing trout stream—that they are not so grand as they suppose. Mayflies, gnats, ephemera. The idea of a Lord God gets in the way of their worshipping themselves. Curious: on the metaphysical scales that they renounce, they are precious, priceless, infinitely interesting, and immortal, whereas on the scales of the most advanced string-quantum holographic hypothesis of which they are the apostles, they are nothing. And time-finite.

No wonder our pagan culture places self-gratification as the legitimate first goal. We must have it now, else, in the next nanosecond, we may be gone. We express this dynamic in overeating and overtalking and boorish comportment. We do not taste, we gobble. We do not converse, we sneer and shout down. When one is trapped at a supper table with a fitness freak, one's sole recourse is to ask him to relate his opinion about whether entropy is consumed by or conserved in black holes, or his most profound observations about the essence of the nature of man, or his understanding of Bach's *Passion*, or the secret to being quite as dull as the Swiss, the Dutch, and Scandinavians, who are marvelous at this.

Do not interrupt, as Ann Coulter would. Don't tell them what they should think, as a professional buffoon like Glenn Beck or Bill O'Reilly on his bad behavior might. Remember that their imaginations have been parched and their minds have probably become as brittle as dry tobacco leaves rattling in an abandoned shed. Chances are the fitness freak will fall silent after a sentence or two and turn to victimize another person at the table. Then devote yourself to the chocolate cake. ■

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From the earliest days of its history, there is a deep layer of Messianic consciousness in the mind of America. We never dreamed that we would have as much political power as we possess today; nor for that matter did we anticipate that the most powerful nation on earth would suffer such an ironic refutation of its dreams of mastering history. For our increased power related our will and purpose to a vaster and vaster entanglement with other wills and purposes, which made it impossible for any single will to prevail or any specific human goal of history easily to become the goal of all mankind.

We were always vague about how power is to be related to the allegedly universal values which we hold in trust for mankind. We were, of course, not immune to the temptation of believing that the universal validity of what we held in trust justified our use of power to establish it.

Generally, however, the legitimization of power was not the purpose of our Messianic consciousness. We felt that by example and by unexplained forces in history our dream would become the regnant reality of history.

In both the Calvinist and the Jeffersonian conception of our national destiny the emphasis lay at the beginning upon providence rather than human power. Jefferson proposed for the seal of the United States a picture of the "children of Israel, led by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night." Washington declared in his first inaugural that "the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are considered, perhaps as deeply, as finally staked on the experiment instructed to the hands of the American people." Most significant was the assurance that we were acting as surrogates, as trustees for mankind.

Such Messianic dreams are not free of the moral pride which creates a hazard to their realization. "God has not been preparing the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples," declared Senator Beveridge of Indiana, "for a thousand years of nothing but vain and idle self-contemplation and self-admiration. He has made us the master organizers of the world to establish system where chaos reigns. ... He has made us adept in government that we may administer government among savage and senile peoples. Were it not for such a force this world would relapse into barbarism and night. And of all our race he has marked the American people as his chosen nation to finally lead in the regeneration of the world." The concept of administering "government among savage and senile peoples" does have power implications. But the legitimization of power is generally subordinate in the American dream to the fact that the concept of a divine favor upon the nation implies a commitment "to lead in the regeneration of mankind." Among us, as well as among communists, an excessive voluntarism which finally brings human history under the control of the human will is in tentative, but not in final, contradiction to a determinism which finds historical destiny favorable at some particular point to man's assumption of mastery over that destiny.

The American experience represents a unique and ironic refutation of the illusion in all such dreams. Illusions about the possibility of managing historical destiny from any particular standpoint in history always involve miscalculation about both the power and the wisdom of the managers and of the weakness and the manageability of the historical "stuff" which is to be managed.

—Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History*

# Arts & Letters

## FILM

[Sugar]

### Rough in the Diamond

By Steve Sailer

"SUGAR" IS A CRITICALLY acclaimed indie film about a 20-year-old Dominican pitcher's minor league baseball season in Iowa. "Half Nelson," the last collaboration of its married auteurs, Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck, brought Ryan Gosling a Best Actor nomination as a caring white liberal teacher in a Brooklyn slum school attended by African-Americans and Dominicans. As numerous Dominican immigrants in New York City are failed minor leaguers, "Sugar" was a logical next film for the pair.

This movie is about a black Dominican, but it was very much made for white Americans. Indeed, "Sugar" exemplifies Sundance movies. It is so sensitive, subtle, soft-spoken, averse to crowd-pleasing gimmicks, and generally beholden to the *Stuff White People Like* rulebook that few ballplayers of any nationality would pay to see it. Dodger slugger Manny Ramirez would snore so loudly through it that the audience couldn't hear the soundtrack's climactic song: Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" sung in Spanish.

Boden and Fleck wanted not a tale of triumph but a statistically representative illustration of the typical Dominican athlete's brief career. We see the young pitcher Sugar (portrayed by Algenis Perez Soto, an amateur second baseman who visibly can't throw his character's

supposed 95 mph fastball) at the Kansas City organization's training academy in the baseball-mad small city of San Pedro de Macoris, birthplace of 73 major league players, including Sammy Sosa. We follow him to spring training in Phoenix, then to Single A ball in Iowa. There he's lonely because there are no Spanish-speaking girls to chat up. After an injury, he's demoted to the bullpen. His pride too wounded to return home, he quits the team and hops a bus to the South Bronx, where he pursues a career in illegal immigration.

Although most Dominicans, such as the American-born Alex Rodriguez, are some shade of beige, San Pedro ballplayers tend to be descended from black Jamaicans brought in to chop sugar cane. Last year, the 88 Dominicans made up almost 12 percent of major league rosters, despite the Dominican Republic having only 3 percent of America's population. The average major league salary is approaching \$3 million, so Dominican big leaguers earn around a quarter of a billion dollars annually.

The young ballplayer claims he's nicknamed "Sugar" because he's "so sweet with the ladies," but Boden and Fleck want their film's title to convey that by signing so many Dominican teens, baseball teams are, like sugar companies, neocolonialist exploiters. To the filmmakers, American ballclubs are to blame both for exploiting Dominicans and for not exploiting African-Americans. Fleck complains that the black American share "has gone down to somewhere around 8 or 9 percent now, while the Dominican population in baseball has risen dramatically. Major League Baseball has taken money out of the inner cities ... and flipped it into the Dominican Republic, where they can sign players much cheaper." In the Sundance worldview, whatever happens is

white people's fault; blacks can't make choices for themselves.

In reality, while MLB teams would love to employ verbally charismatic African-Americans instead of tongue-tied Spanish speakers, black American kids these days mostly consider baseball boring. The Dominican Republic represents one of the few sizable concentrations of fast and strong youths of West African descent who find baseball more fascinating than basketball, soccer, or cricket. (Also, steroids can be bought legally without a prescription in Dominican pharmacies.)

The real scandal is that big league baseball has facilitated the illegal immigration of tens of thousands of washed-up uneducated jocks. It privatizes profits and socializes costs.

The irony in this trend of dramas striving to be "more documentary-like" is that the best documentaries are far more satisfyingly dramatic than "Sugar." For example, Werner Herzog's popular documentary "Grizzly Man" culminates with the annoying protagonist being devoured by a bear. Documentaries that follow somebody as ho-hum as Sugar are unlikely to get widely distributed or even finished.

Boden and Fleck are garnering critical kudos for refusing to create an intriguing plot. Yet they didn't have to redo "Rocky." They could have, say, made the kid not a 20-year-old prospect but an 18-year-old prodigy. Once the audience is rooting for him, they could then have yanked the rug out by revealing that the phenom's agent, like previous Dominican talent hustlers (such as their own technical adviser, ex-Cincinnati Red Jose Rijo), had defrauded the Americans: the sensation's not 18, he's really 22, with just a journeyman's natural talent. Now that would be a story. ■

Rated R for language, some sexuality, and brief drug use.



## BOOKS

[*The Eagle and the Crown: Americans and the British Monarchy*, Frank Prochaska, Yale University Press, 240 pages]

# From George III to George W.

By Andro Linklater

FRANK PROCHASKA offers a provocative thesis in *The Eagle and the Crown*. To the customary list of legacies left by the British after independence—language, the common law, representative government—he argues that we should add a predilection for monarchical rule. Much of his book is devoted to the not very interesting effusions of royalty fervor that periodically swell the bosoms of nominal republicans. But this froth, he suggests, is thrown up by a more subversive undercurrent. For all their pride in being “citizens” rather than “subjects,” Americans hanker for the firm smack of command from a monocratic sovereign. It is a desire planted in them by the extraordinary powers granted to the president by the Constitution, and since 1789, it has been fostered by the explosive increase in the reach of federal authority.

The argument begins with the monarchical mood that infected the Founding Fathers in their deliberations on the president’s role. As Benjamin Franklin Bache observed in 1797, the designers of the Constitution “dismissed the name of king, but they retained a prejudice for his authority. Instead of keeping as little, they kept as much of it as possible for their president.”

They did so despite being aware of good republican alternatives. A classical education had made most delegates to the Constitutional Convention familiar with the examples of an assembly-led democracy in Athens and the Roman

republic’s reliance on consuls to head the government, while James Madison, at least, had also studied the contemporary model of republican Switzerland’s cantonal confederation. And from far away in Paris came Thomas Jefferson’s advocacy of senatorial oversight to guide the Republic’s destiny.

Nevertheless, according to Madison’s notes, what concerned delegates was the extent of the elective monarch’s powers, not whether the post should exist. To quote Bache again, they created a constitution before they had “sufficiently *unmonarchized* their ideas and habits.” The anomalous outcome was a republic that invested its chief executive with the sweeping authority of Article Two of the Constitution, to be commander in chief of the armed forces, to make treaties, to issue pardons, to appoint supreme court judges and “all other officers of the United States,” and to take whatever other action the president deems necessary to “preserve, protect and defend the Constitution.”

With the detached wisdom of his 82 years, Benjamin Franklin justified the decision on psychological grounds. “It will be said that we do not propose to establish kings,” he commented. “But there is a natural inclination in mankind to Kingly Government. They had rather have one tyrant than five hundred. It gives more of the appearance of equality among Citizens, and that they like.” There was good reason both for Adams’s proposal that the president should be addressed as “His Mightiness” and for Jefferson’s acerbic remark that “We were educated in royalism; no wonder if some of us retain that idolatry still.”

According to Prochaska’s argument, the planting of that seed explains the apparently illogical attachment to the folderols of British royalty felt by otherwise republican citizens. The Constitution encourages it as insidiously as it breeds respect for Magna Carta.

Prochaska illustrates the strength of this attachment with examples that range from Washington’s rationale in 1789 for the coronation-like ritual of his inauguration—“it was taken from the

Practice of that Government under which we had lived so long and so happily formerly”—through to *Time* magazine’s all-time record sale in 1997 of 1.2 million copies for an issue devoted to Diana, Princess of Wales.

The Victorian era provides the richest material. The author cites an editorial from the *Richmond Whig* on the eve of the Civil War: “To be under the dominion of a lady like Queen Victoria, distinguished by every virtue, would constitute a favorable exchange for the vulgar rule of a brutish blackguard like Lincoln.” With satisfying symmetry, he finds that remark balanced 30 years later by New York mayor Abram Hewitt paying grateful tribute to “our Queen” for personally preventing “the motherland” from giving formal recognition to the Confederacy.

By the end of the book, when Prochaska quotes Walter Bagehot, editor of *The Economist* and author in 1867 of the incomparable study *The English Constitution*, it is difficult to be sure whether the remarks apply to the east or the west coast of the Atlantic: “So long as the human heart is strong and the human reason weak, Royalty will be strong because it appeals to diffused feeling, and Republics weak because they appeal to understanding.”

Despite the author’s evident intelligence and assiduous research, his case is weakened by serious flaws. Perhaps because the book is also aimed at a British audience, it focuses on the celebrity sizzle of royalty’s appeal rather than the meaty constitutional questions posed by the investment of sovereignty in one individual. Its evidence is largely anecdotal, culled from letters and newspapers, and of necessity highly selective. At first glance, the thousands that mobbed the future Edward VII in Chicago in 1862 seem impressive testimony to royalty’s pulling power, except that in the same city just as many people crowded in some years later to see Buffalo Bill Cody. The affection felt for Victoria was undoubtedly genuine, but with Britain supplying almost half the United States’ imports and consuming about one quarter of its exports, how much of

that feeling was built on commercial goodwill? It was surely more than coincidence that the popularity of Victoria's heirs declined as the scale of British trade diminished.

Most seriously, there is a problem with the very basis of Prochaska's argument. However monarchically minded, the majority of delegates to the Constitutional Convention were more anxious to shore up an inadequate central government than to create a quasi-king. The power of the 13 original states dwarfed that of the United States government under the Articles of Confederation and even under the new federal constitution continued to overshadow it for many years. To cite only the most obvious examples, despite the regal powers accorded him by Article Two, Washington found his directives on native American policy blithely defied by the governors of New York, Pennsylvania, and Georgia. In similar fashion, Adams was

challenged by Virginia over the Alien and Sedition Acts. Jefferson had to call out federal troops in New York to make the 1807 Embargo Act stick, while Madison could not even compel the governor of Massachusetts to go to war in 1812. Not until the trans-Appalachian states emerged as a counterweight to the original 13 and Andrew Jackson threatened to march troops into South Carolina in 1832 did the president amount to much more than *primus inter pares*.

Although Jackson was termed "king" by his opponents, the true extent of the presidency's reach only emerged during the Civil War. When Lincoln's secretary of state, William Seward, told a journalist of the London *Times*, "We elect a king for four years, and give him absolute power within certain limits, which after all he can interpret for himself," the ghost of George III may be said to have walked out of the constitutional closet. At that point, the thesis of *The Eagle and the Crown* begins to make sense.

Not only did the West Wing court with which we are now familiar start to appear in the White House, but the new wealth of the Gilded Age engendered a snobbish appetite for the social rank and hereditary titles available across the Atlantic. (This sort of exchange cuts both ways: I vividly recall a visit to the House of Lords some years back and the envious expressions of a dozen dumpy duchesses as a tiara'd Jamie Lee Curtis sashayed past with genuinely aristocratic hauteur in her guise as Baroness Haden-Guest.) Since then, by way of the New Deal and the imperial presidency of Richard Nixon, the president has become more powerful and more insulated from the people than any monarch.

It may well be objected that the checks and balances—the legislative power of Congress and the reviewing power of the judiciary—have also acquired more strength, reducing any accusation of kingship to a mere jibe. But what is often overlooked is that the sovereign power of the presidency has grown with the supremacy of the United States. And in one particular fashion, it has been used within the country's bor-

ders to erode the difference between a subject and a citizen.

There is one influential section of the population that very properly has given up some of the privileges of citizenship and are, strictly speaking, the president's subjects. The Armed Forces take an oath of allegiance, not to the United States or to the Constitution as some believe, but to the president in person. They are as much his men as the red-coats were George III's. In times of war or grave emergency, their status grows to be the norm because citizens identify themselves with the military. But in doing so they perforce adopt the outlook of subjects themselves. It is not a state of mind to enter into lightly, but it is one that recent history has made familiar to us all.

Meanwhile, the original monarchical model has undergone an equally dramatic metamorphosis in the opposite direction. Exactly 200 years ago, George III still had enough power to appoint and maintain in office the most unpopular prime minister in British history, Spencer Perceval, shortly to achieve distinction as the only premier ever to be assassinated. Now compared to the immense executive and legislative power concentrated in a prime minister's hands, the sovereign authority vested in Queen Elizabeth II amounts to little more than ceremony—with one vital exception. It is to her that the armed forces swear loyalty. When your country is engaged in unnecessary conflict, there is much to be said for being able to distinguish the political fool who led you into war from the sovereign whose troops are fighting it.

A strong understanding is what Bagehot expected of the citizens of a republic. *The Eagle and The Crown* illustrates how easy it is to let that focus be swamped by "a natural inclination to Klingy government." ■

*Andro Linklater is the author of An Artist in Treason: The Extraordinary Double Life of General James Wilkinson, due for publication by Bloomsbury in September 2009.*

## MOVING?

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[*A Brief Inquiry Into the Meaning of Sin and Faith, John Rawls, Harvard University Press, 252 pages*]

## Rawls at the Crossroads

By Luke Coppen

MAY 1945. The U.S. Army is engaged in a fierce struggle with Japanese forces for control of Luzon, the largest island of the Philippines. A first sergeant asks for two volunteers: one to scout enemy positions, the other to give badly needed blood to an injured soldier. Two young men—John Bordley Rawls and his friend, Deacon—step forward. Deacon's blood type matches the wounded soldier's, so he heads off toward the field hospital. On the way Japanese mortars rain down. Deacon dives into a foxhole, but a shell lands nearby, blowing him to smithereens.

John Rawls recalled this incident in his eminent old age in a file called "On My Religion" found on his computer after his death in 2002. Writing more than 50 years after the fatal shell fell, Rawls was still shocked by the loss of his friend. He offered Deacon's death as one of three milestones in his transformation from "a believing orthodox Episcopalian" to an agonized agnostic. (The other two were a jarring, jingoistic sermon by an Army pastor and his discovery of the horrors of the Holocaust.)

Rawls grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, in a mildly religious atmosphere. His mother was an Episcopalian, his father a Southern Methodist. Rawls described his youth as "only conventionally religious" until his final two years at Princeton. "Then things changed," he wrote. "I became deeply concerned about theology and its doctrines." He even considered seminary, but decided his first duty was to fight alongside his friends. After the war, Rawls carved out an international reputation as a political philosopher, but until now few have

known about his earlier incarnation as a passionate young Christian theologian.

In *A Brief Inquiry*, we come face to face with this bright, earnest, devout figure. The book reproduces Rawls's senior thesis, discovered by chance in the Princeton library shortly after his death, together with excellent interpretive essays by Robert Merrihew Adams and Joshua Cohen, and Thomas Nagel. Rawls submitted the thesis in December 1942 and earned a grade of 98 out of 100. I'm not surprised: it's a blazingly original and ambitious work, all the more remarkable considering Rawls was just 21 when he wrote it.

The thesis has two basic aims: to show what Christianity is and what it's not. For the young Rawls, Christianity is assuredly not the faith proclaimed by the Catholic Church. He argues that the two greatest Catholic thinkers—Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas—made a fateful philosophical error. Their mistake was to express Christian doctrine in terms of Greek philosophy. "The difference between Catholicism and Platonism is a matter of degree," Rawls asserts. Augustine, Aquinas, Plato, and Aristotle all fell into the trap of "naturalism," which he defines idiosyncratically as "any view which constructs the cosmos in naturalistic terms." The naturalistic thinker sees things, not people. Even God is conceived as a "thing" in the universe, the obscure object of our desire. Rawls writes,

I believe that naturalism leads inevitably to individualism, that it cannot explain community and personality, and that it loses the inner core of the universe. Since this manner of thought has been prevalent in the West since Augustine we are proposing more or less of a 'revolution' by repudiating this traditional line of thought. I do not believe that the Greek tradition mixes very well with Christianity, and the sooner we stop kow-towing to Plato and Aristotle the better.

He then adds, rather primly: "An ounce of the Bible is worth a pound (possibly a ton) of Aristotle."

The young Rawls is not the first to dream of prising Christianity from the hands of pagan philosophers; it's a recurring theme of Protestant theology. Rawls is indebted to Anders Nygren, the Swedish Lutheran author of *Agape and Eros*. Nygren contrasted the ancient Greek notion of love (*eros*) with the New Testament ideal (*agape*) and accused Augustine of creating a monstrous hybrid of the two. He claimed that Luther restored *agape* providentially to its true place in Christian theology.

Not surprisingly, Catholics find this objectionable. In the less famous part of his 2006 Regensburg address—the speech in which, according to most reports, he insulted the Muslim world—Pope Benedict XVI energetically defended the Church's Greek philosophical inheritance. The Pope said the "encounter between the biblical message and Greek thought did not happen by chance," but was part of the divine plan because it anchored Christian faith in reason.

The young Rawls sees further proof of Catholicism's innate individualism in the lives of its mystics. "We reject mysticism," he declares, "because it seeks a union which excludes all particularity, and wants to overcome all distinctions." We might object that Rawls is confusing the mysticism of the West with that of the East. When St. John of the Cross achieved mystical union with God he didn't become a vaporous divinity; he remained John of the Cross. But Rawls insists on his point. The trouble with mystics, he says, is that they regard God as an object in the universe—the highest object, to be sure, but nonetheless an object. They teach that God alone satisfies man's thirst for beauty, goodness, and truth. That is not an innocent mistake, says Rawls: it is a sin. "If one cannot have faith in God just because He is what He is, but has to add that He is most satisfying in his beauty and such an *object* that we shall never crave anything else—then perhaps it is better not to be a Christian at all." The implication is radical: John of the Cross and his ilk are no saints; they are dangerous heretics.

Having established what Christianity is not (Catholicism), Rawls explains what it is. It's sometimes said that what matters most in theology is where you begin. Rawls's theology starts with the claim that man's unique quality is not his reason, his sensitivity to beauty, or his other abilities, but "that he was made for community." So when we say man is created in God's image, we mean he is able to enter into community, "since God himself is communal, being the triune God." The true Christian grasps that the universe is not a collection of objects, a cosmic junkyard, but a community of Creator and created.

With community firmly marked out as his starting point, Rawls addresses two classic theological problems: sin and faith. He defines sin as the "repudiation, destruction and abuse of community for the sake of the self." Egotism is the "master sin" from which all lesser evils flow. To see sin in action, Rawls says, look no further than your local athletics club. The members pride themselves on their sportsmanship and consider non-athletes inferior. He calls this the phenomenon of "the closed society." In a passage that is filled with pathos, given that he was about to take up arms against the Axis powers, Rawls describes Nazi Germany as the ultimate closed society. "If one was not a Catholic," he writes, "one could become one. If one was not an educated Frenchman, one might also become one. But one cannot become an 'Aryan' by wish. One is excluded or included from birth." When a group's membership is utterly exclusive, he says, egotism knows no bounds.

Rawls believes that sin throws man into an "abyss of isolation." Faith restores the sinner to community. But we can do nothing to merit this restoration. Those who seek to placate God with good works, Rawls says, are like social contract theorists. Both seek to bind the "other" to protect their personal interests. Regardless of whether it is political or religious, a society based on a contract is no community at all.

The rejection of merit is, of course, one of the more controversial features of

his magnum opus, *A Theory of Justice*. It's not the only point of contact between *A Brief Inquiry* and Rawls's mature masterwork. As Cohen and Nagel note in their introduction, both works insist on the separateness of persons, a morality defined by interpersonal relations rather than by seeking the highest good, and the evil of inequality based on exclusion and hierarchy. In his earlier work, Rawls's frame of reference is moral and theological, whereas in *TJ* (as fans know it) it is moral and political.

The conclusion of *A Brief Inquiry* may shock those who only know Rawls the agnostic. In language that would not look out of place in St. Paul's epistles, Rawls looks forward to the day ("which may not be far off") when Christ vanquishes sin and establishes the perfect heavenly community.

"On My Religion" leaves little doubt that Rawls would have been embarrassed by his youthful religious zeal. The war destroyed his unselfconscious certitudes. After he learned about the Holocaust while stationed in Asingan, he found it difficult to pray and decided finally that the idea that God guided history according to his will was "hideous and evil." Unlike the New Atheists, Rawls's fundamental problem was not God's existence but the rightness and justice of Christian moral teachings. "I came to think of many of them as morally wrong, in some cases even repugnant," he recalled. "To the extent that Christianity is taken seriously, I came to think it could have deleterious effects on one's character."

Many today argue that the trouble with Christianity is that it is too moral. For Rawls, it wasn't moral enough. Perhaps this explains why he spent the rest of his adult life developing an alternative moral theory, rooted not in the divine will but in his own exacting sense of justice. Between *A Brief Inquiry* and *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls abandoned an astringent form of Christianity for an even more astringent moralism. ■

*Luke Coppen is editor of London's Catholic Herald.*

[*The Conservative Century: From Reaction to Revolution*, Gregory L. Schneider, Rowman & Littlefield, 261 pages]

## Writing the Old Right

By Lynn D. Robinson

THE SERMONS of Dr. Jerry Falwell and the hymn singing of the Thomas Road Baptist Church's congregants on "The Old Time Gospel Hour" were familiar sounds in my childhood. Another frequently heard radio voice was that of Dr. James Dobson on "Focus on the Family," from whom my parents learned much about keeping teenage sexuality in check and countering the pernicious threats of secular humanism, Satanism, and "Dungeons & Dragons."

My father, a postal worker, and my mother, a homemaker, converted from lukewarm Presbyterianism to evangelical Protestantism and began attending a local Baptist congregation. They, like many other Christians, were part of that wave of middle-class Americans in the 1970s who were disaffected by the attempts of the federal government, public schooling, mainstream media, and other institutions to impose on them cultural values that felt alien. For them, the link from religious and cultural conservatism to political conservatism was drawn by media personalities like Dr. Falwell. They were not acquainted with the great conservative works of Friedman, Hayek, and Mises on economics or Kirk, Voegelin, Kendall, Strauss, and Oakeshott on political thought.

My parents, in fact, were typical of the middle-class radicals of their generation, the ready and willing foot soldiers of the Republican Party's shift toward conservatism. Their movement, if it can be called such, was an amalgam of traditional middle-class values: religion, anti-Communist sentiment, and antipathy toward taxes and social-welfare pro-



grams. These strands never wove together into a tight chord, however. Time and again, they unraveled. Ideologically motivated conservatives or libertarians found that Republican politicians and middle-class conservatives were unreliable, even promiscuous in thought and action.

In *The Conservative Century: From Reaction to Revolution*, Gregory L. Schneider examines this “protean character” of modern American conservatism. His aim is not to find the true nature of conservatism—whatever that means—or to provide a comprehensive recent history of conservatism. Rather, his book is a scholarly endeavor to provide a plausible explanation for the various definitions of conservatism that were posited, questioned, and abandoned in the course of 20th-century American politics.

Unlike other historians, Schneider does not neglect the importance of the Old Right. (In his acknowledgments, in fact, he mentions that he had intended to write a book about the Old Right.) In his passages on H.L. Mencken, Albert J. Nock, Rose Wilder Lane, Isabel Paterson, Garet Garrett, Lysander Spooner, and William Graham Sumner, he provides rich material for those who want a better appreciation of American individualism and classical liberalism. He shows that these figures were outsiders: they were not, for the most part, directly connected to partisan politics. They represented an elitist strand in American thought that did not sit well with middle-class sentiments on religion, foreign policy, or even economics. They adhered to what Schneider describes as “laissez-faire conservatism.” Indeed, in their obvious disdain for traditional religion and average Americans, they differed greatly with the conservatism that emerged after World War II.

In Schneider’s analysis, William F. Buckley Jr. played the key role of intellectual and political entrepreneur, creating a strong, middle-class movement in the optimistic days of the 1950s. It was Buckley who crafted a political plat-

form on which a movement could be built to resist Communism and pursue socially and culturally traditional goals. At *National Review*, Buckley pulled together public intellectuals like Russell Kirk and James Burnham, who tied American conservatism to conservative thought in Europe. Kirk built a concept that emphasized continuity between American and European conservative political thought and practice, seeing the War of Independence—not the Revolutionary War—as an objection to the British crown’s trampling of citizens’ rights in the colonies. Edmund Burke’s parliamentary statements on behalf of the colonists make this a plausible claim. Kirk, a convert to Catholicism, also saw the importance of religious traditions and the moral guidance that

It is tempting to regard the intellectual pioneers of the conservative ascendancy as flawlessly Machiavellian, but there were missteps and mistakes along the way. As Jeffrey Hart, a longtime editor of *National Review*, noted in his *Making of the American Conservative Mind*, *NR*’s editorial response to the civil-rights movement was not the editors’ finest hour. Schneider’s brief account also paints an unflattering picture of the movement’s attitude to segregationist policies in the South and the civil-rights movement. This is an important part of the tale: it demonstrates not only an error of judgment but also the dynamic character of modern American conservatism, ever tacking and resetting its sails in the midst of changing political winds.

#### SCHNEIDER’S BRIEF ACCOUNT ALSO PAINTS AN UNFLATTERING PICTURE OF THE MOVEMENT’S ATTITUDE TO SEGREGATIONIST POLICIES IN THE SOUTH AND THE CIVIL-RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

these faiths provided for most people. Buckley, though himself something of an elitist, saw much about the American elite that he did not like and sympathized with the religious and anti-Communist sympathies of middle-class Americans.

One of the first challenges for the postwar conservative movement, Schneider makes clear, was how to deal with anti-Communism in the United States. Buckley defended Joseph McCarthy’s concerns about active Red agents in the U.S. government, but he soon realized that some anti-Communist groups on the Right harmed the cause by their extremist claims, which strained against the common sense of most middle-class Americans. Thus *National Review* attempted and to a large extent succeeded in creating some distance between the respectable conservative movement and more aggressive forms of anti-Communism, such as the John Birch Society.

Similarly, when some libertarians joined the movement to oppose the draft and U.S. military action in Vietnam, the rising swell of middle-class conservatives largely did not identify with this antiwar sentiment. They saw the protesters as hippies or worse and wanted the U.S. to keep up the fight against Communism. Libertarian voices on this issue were therefore marginalized at publications like *National Review*. The wisdom of classical liberalism was only to be heeded in certain circumscribed areas, such as economic policy.

Schneider also explores the somewhat familiar—yet still crucial—story of how these idea-brokers on the Right began to attract significant numbers of disgruntled Democrats who were alarmed at the expanded social-welfare programs of Lyndon Johnson and the emerging liberal order. Some of these intellectuals shifted party affiliation—though perhaps not their actual policy positions. Schneider compellingly illus-

trates that the intellectual and political influence of these neoconservatives—one thinks of Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, Richard John Neuhaus, Elliott Abrams, Jeane Kirkpatrick—began to alter what it meant to be conservative.

As these Democratic thinkers drifted toward the Republican Party because of their disaffection with the New Left, a much larger movement of middle-class voters, particularly evangelical Protestants and devout Roman Catholics, began migrating in the same direction. But these voters remained fickle, as Schneider notes:

During the mid-1970s grassroots Christians did not reliably support conservative Republicans for high office. Jimmy Carter, a born-again Christian himself, secured the support of evangelicals in the 1976 election. Gerald Ford was pro-abortion, as was the majority of the Republican Party; the GOP would not have a pro-life platform until the 1980 convention.

Carter promptly squandered his popularity among evangelicals, however, by permitting the Internal Revenue Service to investigate the tax-exempt status of Christian schools in the South because of their all-white student composition. And his dovish foreign policy also grated on right-wingers, giving the neoconservatives and the Republican Party plenty of rhetorical ammunition. By 1980, this disaffection had swept Ronald Reagan into the White House, further solidifying the bond between

the conservative movement and the Republican Party.

The ascended conservative movement carried within it many tensions, though these were disguised by political success. Schneider recognizes that the prominence of neoconservative intellectuals exasperated many traditional conservatives, who did not want an internationalist foreign policy or to accept the growth of the administrative state. Some older conservatives began to identify themselves as “paleoconservative.” They were easily brushed aside, however, as Buckley and the *National Review* crowd recognized that the middle-class majority in the Republican Party did not find the harder right-wing edge or policy positions of paleoconservatism compelling. Leading neoconservatives, moreover, suspected paleoconservatives of giving cover to anti-Semitic and racist factions.

These wounds have not healed to this day. Schneider adroitly walks a very diplomatic line, avoiding the normal polemics of both sides of the neoconservative and paleoconservative argument. He makes the case that there is no stable meaning to the term conservatism in the United States over time, that the relationship between the post-war conservative movement and the Republican Party is one of mind-boggling complexity.

Given its catalogue of internecine bickering on the Right, *The Conservative Century* leaves one wondering why the more intelligent do not opt out of the political process, as the individualists of the Old Right did. At the same time, though, the reader puts down this book with the sense that the conservative movement actually draws strength from its quarrelsome tendencies, which inspire an intellectual dynamism that drives the movement forward. Schneider shows that the work of defining conservatism is never finished—nor should it be. ■

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## Keynes

*Continued from page 24*

cut in marginal tax rates to stimulate demand and, thereby, investment, while a supply-sider would favor a cut in marginal tax rates to stimulate investment and thereby demand. The policies look the same from the outside.

Another overlap between Keynesians and supply-siders is their nonchalance about deficit spending and the inflation it prompts. This attitude is revealed in the supply-siders’ gusto for tax cuts even without offsetting spending cuts. Supply-siders tout the revenue-enhancing effects of slashing marginal tax rates, but the extent of those effects is disputed. As the monetarist Milton Friedman used to point out, the level of government spending, not taxation alone, is the better measure of the burden of government, since one way or another the money is extracted from the private economy.

The trouble with Keynesianism is not only that its focus on macroeconomic aggregates to the neglect of microeconomic human action on the ground “conceal[s] the most fundamental mechanisms of change,” as F.A. Hayek noted. It is also that Keynesianism sanctions politicians in doing what they wish to do already: spend the people’s money, debauch the currency, and engineer society in their own image—all in order to stay in power. All too often, the Right’s economic program has amounted, in practice, to a variation on Keynesian themes—stimulating demand through tax cuts without spending cuts or military spending rather than the public works favored by the Left. The result, either way, is bigger government, ballooning deficits, inflation, and recession.

It’s not true that “we’re all Keynesians now.” But enough of us are to justify concern about the future. ■

Sheldon Richman is the editor of *The Freeman* ([www.fee.org](http://www.fee.org)).

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# The Republic Strikes Back

American political discourse, defined as it is by Arthur Schlesinger's ghost and Bill Bennett's ghostwriter, has contracted to such a pinpoint that I half expect a Big

Bang to blow it all apart, as forbidden thoughts—Peace! Liberty! Localism!—bust loose from the thought prisons and the air is filled with the glorious cacophony of patriotic debate as free men and women relearn the language and habits of vigorous citizenship.

Ah, well: dare to dream.

I saw this dream last Labor Day weekend when Ron Paul, the legislative embodiment of John Quincy Adams's gnome—"Always vote for principle, though you may vote alone, and you may cherish the sweetest reflection that your vote is never lost"—threw a "Rally for the Republic" in Minneapolis as a Twin Cities counterpoint to John McCain's zombie dance in St. Paul.

I was a last-minute addition to the rally's roster of speakers and hell-raisers. As I paced antsily, waiting to take the stage at the Target Center, it occurred to me that if my jokes bombed I would hear the sound of 10,000 people not laughing. (Happily, the crowd was terrific; you can find the speech on YouTube, though I must caution you: I am far better looking in person.)

The campaign put me up at a bed and breakfast in Excelsior, Minnesota, whose contribution to Top 40 culture was seeded when, in 1964, Mick Jagger, having played at the Danceland ballroom the night before, was standing in line to get his prescription filled at the Excelsior drugstore. Seems a local character named Jimmy Hutmaker started yapping about how he loved his cherry coke but that morning he was

given a different flavor and y'know, Mr. Jagger, you can't always get what you want...

Call it a suburban legend, skeptic, but no man born with a living soul denies it.

At breakfast the morn of the rally, I sat across the table from a friendly dude wearing a peace-sign T-shirt and looking like an affable old surfer. He introduced himself as Gary Johnson, the former two-term governor of New Mexico. Over the next day, I spent a fair amount of time chatting with Governor Johnson: mountain-climber, triathlete, vetoer of 750 bills.

He told me that he may take a shot at the Republican presidential nomination in 2012 as an antiwar, anti-Fed, pro-personal liberties, slash-government-spending candidate—in other words, a Ron Paul libertarian.

South Carolina governor Mark Sanford seems to be carving out similar space in the GOP. While Sanford's stubborn parsimony within the spendthrift GOP is welcome—he is surely a stream of fresh air in a mephitic party—consider, if you will, Gary Johnson.

Yes, as a congressman Sanford opposed the U.S. intervention in Kosovo under a Democratic president; Gary Johnson opposed a Republican president's war upon Iraq. Sanford reluctantly endorsed McCain in 2008; Johnson emphatically endorsed Ron Paul. Sanford has potential on civil liberties; Johnson, like Paul, has the guts to call for the legalization of marijuana and an end to the drug war.

As this issue went to press, Governor Johnson told me that he was keeping his options open for 2012. Keep an eye out for him, will you?

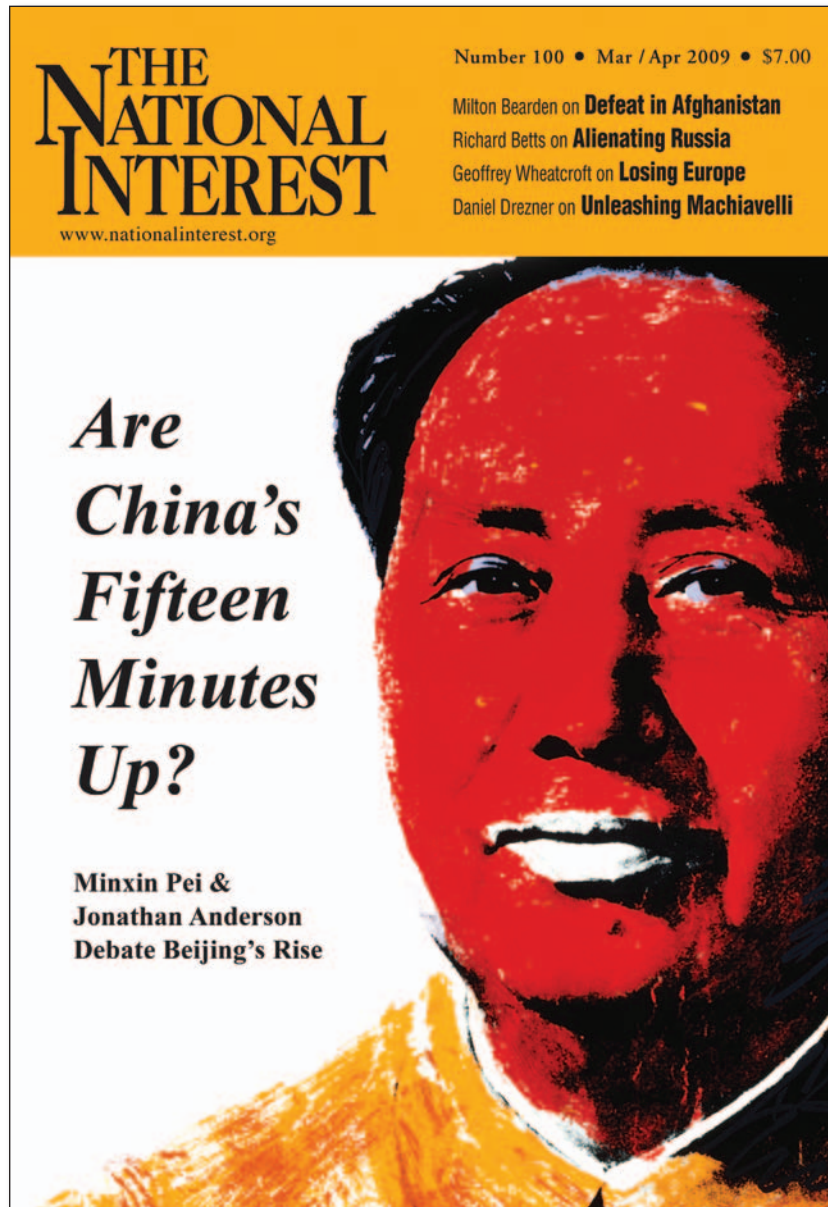
Ron Paul started something. Or, rather, he revealed something: liberty has a constituency. I was heartened mightily by the crowd in Minneapolis, which was overwhelmingly young. What a rousing sight: bright and enthusiastic kids afire with the spirit of liberty, of resistance to regimentation and the tyranny of standardization. Homeschoolers, homebrewers, punk rockers, evangelical Christians, radical Kansans, and reactionary New Englanders. These were American girls and boys, beautifully stained in the American grain, hip to Republican lies and numbing Democratic statism. Hell no, they won't go. They'll not be cannon fodder for the wars of Bush-Cheney or Obama-Biden. They demand honesty and liberty and respect for all things small and smaller; they have nothing but scorn for the liars and whores who run the empire.

They reminded me of Emerson's description of the Loco Foco generation: "The new race is stiff, heady, and rebellious; they are fanatics in freedom; they hate tolls, taxes, turnpikes, banks, hierarchies, governors, yea, almost laws." (Spare me the mewling about "ordered liberty," please—50 years of conservative pieties about "ordered liberty" led to Dick Cheney and a movement full of "men" who dared not open their mouths to defend liberty when she needed it most. Give me disorderly hinterland rebels any day.)

What I mean to say is that even if you can't always get what you want, I think the kids are all right. ■

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